The Effect of New Marriages Among the Aged Upon the Disengagement Process

by

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the
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THE EFFECT OF NEW MARRIAGES AMONG THE AGED UPON THE DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS

By

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This study dealt with the impact of marriage among older persons upon the disengagement process. Disengagement theory posits successful aging as a process of gradual social and psychological withdrawal with associated personality changes.

The experimental population was comprised of persons 60 years of age or over who were wed in Alachua County, Florida, and whose marriages were of less than five years' duration. These subjects resided in a nine-county region in north-central Florida. A comparative sample of older persons was selected from the same region without regard to their marital status. The experimental sample consisted of 71 subjects and the comparison group numbered 60.

Most of the data were obtained in the homes of the respondents by means of an interview schedule administered by the investigator. The schedule incorporated three measures of societal engagement: the life-space measure f score, a role count, and a perceived lifespace score. In addition it contained a life-satisfaction index, questions regarding

background characteristics, and a series of open-ended items concerning the respondents' marital experiences. Data also were obtained from the marriage-license applications regarding the experimental population.

The central hypothesis argued that marriages contracted late in life serve to retard the disengagement process. Two subhypotheses were formulated: (1) female subjects in the experimental group will be less disengaged than the males in that group; (2) married subjects in the comparison group will be less disengaged than unmarried subjects in that group.

Five working hypotheses and five corollaries were constructed to test the influence of number of children, number of siblings, rural-urban residence, age of spouse, and race. The corollaries stated that if statistically significant differences were found for any of the five variables, the relationship would be more pronounced in the experimental than in the comparison group.

While none of the hypotheses was substantiated on all three measures of engagement at an acceptable level of confidence, the data did lend some support to the hypotheses dealing with the influence of being newlywed, being married, having more children, having more siblings, having a young spouse, and living in a city on delaying the disengagement process. Likewise the corollaries failed to find support on all three measures at an appropriate confidence level. Nevertheless, two of the corollaries, concerned with the relationship of number of siblings and age of spouse to disengagement, received some support. Race and sex did not appear to affect the disengagement process. One of the corollaries, concerned with the number of children, was borne out in the direction opposite from that predicted.

The findings of this study appear to underscore the necessity for continued refinement of the theory of disengagement. Successful aging remains a rather elusive concept, and neither activity nor disengagement should be considered the sole indicator of it. Measures of the aging process such as the life-satisfaction index may need to be revised and subjected to further testing on diverse populations.

Future research dealing with the influence of older marriages on disengagement would profit from use of the longitudinal design. Comparison of similarities and differences between marriages contracted at younger and older ages could extend our knowledge in the fields of both social gerontology and sociology of the family.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Nature and Purpose of the Study

In this country, and some others, both the number and the proportion of older people in the population have been rising. This increase is due to a variety of factors. Such things as improvements in sanitation, "miracle" drugs, better diets, new surgical techniques, widespread health programs, and higher levels of living have succeeded in keeping more people alive all along the age continuum. When such developments are coupled with a reduction in the birth rate and low levels of immigration, the population begins to age. With more people reaching older ages and with fewer new members being admitted into a society, the population pyramid begins to bulk large at the higher ages.

The results of these trends are reflected in the following data: in 1940, persons aged 65 and over in the United States numbered 9,019,314 and comprised 6.7 percent of the population; in 1970, the corresponding figures were 20,049,592 persons and 9.87 percent of the population (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1970:4).

This dramatic demographic change has generated a high degree of interdisciplinary interest in the relatively new field of social gerontology.

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[1] The first usage of the term "social gerontology" was by Robert J. Havighurst and Ruth Albrecht in the Preface of their book, *Older People* (1960:v).

A review of the existing literature reveals that most of the research on the problems of the aged has dealt with death, bereavement, health, widowhood, physical infirmities, nursing homes, adjustment to retirement, and other problems typically encountered by very old persons. It is clear that the ordinary or expected phenomena concerning our senior citizens have received increased attention from social scientists.

With the greater part of the research being focused on decrements in health, loss of roles, et cetera, little attention has been given to the resumption of old roles or the assumption of new roles, especially those implied by new marriages and remarriages. This neglect exists despite the fact that new marriages among the aged, as will be subsequently shown, are relatively common and important.

This dissertation will focus on elderly newlyweds and the effect that new marriages contracted by aged persons have upon the disengagement process.

Theoretical Frame of Reference

Cumming, Dean, Howell, and McCaffrey formulated the theoretical framework describing the disengagement process (1960:14-23).

This process is most often thought of as a mutual withdrawal which takes place between aging persons and others in the social system. The several dimensions of the process, along with illustrations, will be presented in the next chapter where these aspects are operationalized. In this overview it is sufficient for it to be seen as an inevitable mutual withdrawal, resulting in reduced interaction between the aging person and others in the social system.

An old person becomes less involved in the life around him than when he was younger, and his withdrawal may be accompanied by an increased preoccupation with self.

The process is seen as functional for society.[2] Therefore, it is a societal expectation, and reciprocity is implicit in it. Indeed, the social order must have some means that pave the way or make it easy for the elderly to move toward eventual disengagement, and the older person is expected voluntarily to cooperate in the process.

When the process is complete, the equilibrium which existed at middle age between the individual and society has given way to a new equilibrium characterized by a much greater distance between the aged individual and his society.

Three orders of change should be distinguishable in disengagement. First, there should be an observable reduction in the absolute number of people with whom the aged person interacts. Second, there should be a qualitative change even in the interaction that remains, especially in terms of time and purpose. The type of activities actually changes. The aged person reduces activities that involve the outside world and takes on activities that are more inner-directed. He gives up activities that call for interaction with others and adds those activities that center on self (Cumming and Henry, 1961:8-9 and 38-45). Lastly, we should see some patterns of personality altering to accommodate this increased involvement with self. The last is seen as a circular procedure that both causes and is the result of the first two changes. The older person is conceived as being at the center of a network of social interactions and, as he ages, his social life constricts and he experiences a curtailment of involvement in the social system. Disengagement is viewed as a process which is beneficial to both the individual and society.

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[2] This study will not delve into what can be done to the social structure in order to catalyze the process. Inherently, the larger society has the power to do many things to facilitate or impede disengagement.

There were three basic points in the original work by Cumming and associates. They stated that the process of withdrawal is modal for the aged, that disengagement is both intrinsic and inevitable, and that undergoing the process is a condition of successful aging.

Henry, in a later work, redefined the disengagement process as not necessarily inevitable but still maintained that the equilibrium that existed in middle life between the individual and society gives way gradually to a new equilibrium characterized by greater distance (1963:377-393).

Williams and Wirths (1965:3) agreed that the process is intrinsic to aging but probably not inevitable. They stated that disengagement is best defined as a process of mutual severing of ties between the individual and the social milieu in which he lives. The process involves a reduced normative control by the system and reduced obligations to it.

Rose and Peterson (1965:361-365) defined the disengagement process as a preparation for death, and maintained that the process is a universal, though it may vary in degree of graduality from one culture to another and it may not be inevitable for all people in each society.

Two research projects (Thompson and Streib, 1961:200; and Maddox, 1965:117-130) even questioned that disengagement was a mark of successful aging. Maddox concluded that disengagement, as a correlate of aging, was found much more frequently in the very advanced age levels--a time when physical and mental decline is most likely. Thompson and Streib also found that disengagement worked only for "very old" categories; by "very old" they meant 80 years old or older.

Two articles (Kapnick, Goodman, and Cornwell, 1968:305-310; and Glenn and Grimes, 1968:563-575) clearly demonstrated that not all social involvement decreases with age. The authors proved that political interests and activities increase with age.

Videbeck and Knox (1965:37-48) challenged the modality of disengagement. In a longitudinal study, a part of which measured the involvement level of the subjects, they found that 90 percent of the over-65 nonparticipants were also nonparticipants five years earlier and 90 percent of the 65-year-old group and older who were participants were classified as participants five years earlier. The participation variables employed were church and club activities, public meetings attended, time spent reading, and political activity. This finding seems to indicate that a person's adjustment in the latter part of his life-cycle will merely reflect a continuance of a life style developed in former years.

Although the evidence presented above does appear to throw doubt on some of the basic tenets of the disengagement theory, there does seem to be general agreement that the process, at least, does exist. Most social scientists are even willing to grant the mutuality of disengagement. Certainly, given a generalized natural reduction in energy levels, aged individuals should make willing accomplices in the process of their separation from societal involvement. Even the opponents of disengagement theory accept the direction of the sociocultural forces which are generally against a high level of participation in society by the elderly.

Hence, an intellectual challenge is clearly present to empirically define this mutual withdrawal, measure to what extent it is occurring, and outline situations (other than increased aging) that either speed up or retard the process.

Havighurst (1961:8-13) posited the disengagement theory against the activity theory. The activity theory, developed through the years by Cavan (1949:71-83), Beard (1949:274-279), Albrecht (1951:380-386), Philips (1957:215-216), Burgess (1960:271-298), and Williams, et.al. (1963:261) hypothesized that a high level of activity and social involvement is the more desirable adaptation for aged people to make in society. Havighurst stated that the activity theory is favored by the symbolic interactionists and social practitioners who suggest that people should maintain the activities and attitudes of middle age as long as possible and that old people only become disinvolved against their will, and in so doing become the passive victims of society. On the other hand, the disengagement theory is favored by functionalist theoreticians who view it as constructive and necessary for the continuity of society. In addition, they see the aged as cooperative actors in the process.

Therefore, the disengagement theorists maintain that disengagement reflects successful aging, while the activity theorists claim that activity represents successful aging.

From the above arguments, it looks as if the two positions are indeed quite irreconcilable. But, as a matter of fact, they are exactly reciprocal. The results of one are conceived in the degree of social activity and the consequences of the other are conceived in the degree of social isolation.

In reality, then, a test of one of the theories automatically becomes a test of the other. This study will do both, although, for methodological reasons only, the effect of the new unions will be stated as being measured against disengagement.

Past Research on Older Marriages

A thorough search revealed that few research projects have ever been undertaken with aged newlyweds as the subject of investigation. One study (Bernard, 1956:50-66) examined remarriage in all age groups, hence was not primarily focused on new marriages among the aged; however, statistics were gathered for advanced age groups which should give some insights on what characteristics to expect in the population selected for this project. Bernard found:

1. That the proportion of all marriages that are remarriages increases with age because the proportion of persons who have been previously married increases with age.
2. That most of the previous marriages in the young to early-middle-age groupings ended in divorce while the majority of those in the late-middle to old-age groupings ended in death.
3. That approximately one-third of the women over 65 who remarry marry younger men while only about 5 percent of the men over 65 who remarry do so with older women.

An important work done in the area is reported in a University of Connecticut monograph (McKain:1969). However, the major thrust of that investigation was to ascertain the marital adjustment of older people who were marrying again in their later years and to develop a scale to measure the success potential of a retirement remarriage.

The McKain study consisted of a sample of 100 couples, with no control group. He included only those unions in which both partners had been married previously. Only brides who were 60 years old or over and grooms who were at least 65 years of age at the time of the wedding were considered for selection in the study.

Both the Bernard and McKain studies had their basis in the testing of theory in the field of marriage and the family and they were only secondarily concerned about the possible ramifications of their work upon the theories of aging and agedness. In fact, there has been no research to date with aged newlyweds as subjects and based solely in a gerontological frame of reference.

It is true, however, that in the McKain study (1969:101) the effect of the remarriages on the process of disengagement was incidentally tested. The data seemed to indicate that marriages in the later years counter the disengagement process in familial relationships, but the reduction of other roles in society continues. However, the results were inconclusive.

Both the Bernard and McKain studies excluded aged subjects who were marrying for the first time. It is true that never-married subjects would have no relevance in studies seeking to describe the keys to successful remarriage. However, even aged bachelors and spinsters becoming newlyweds have to cope with disengagement, so they will not be excluded from the present investigation.

McKain (1969:1-13) strongly contended that there is a societal ethic against elderly people marrying and that the children of the elderly are very much opposed to the remarriage of their parents. However, the mimeographed data tables that his work was based on clearly indicate that the majority of the children of both the brides and the grooms encouraged the marriage of their parents (McKain's Retirement Marriage Statistical Tables, 1969:4-5). Moreover, Bernard (1956:25) suggested that throughout society there exists an institutionalizing of remarriage in all age groups. One reason that more older people are remarrying might be that the vitality of the aged people of today is greater that that of those of the past. The advances in medicine have done much more than create an increase in life expectancy. New drugs and surgical techniques have brought about better health and improved physical vigor among the older population in addition to extending their life-span (Rose and Peterson, 1965:364;Youmans, 1967:201).

Hence, with a prolonged period of energy and potential usefulness, many old people in a sense are reverting to an earlier stage in the life cycle and becoming newlyweds. The data in Table 1, accumulated by the Administration on Aging, attest that new marriages contracted by older persons are not uncommon. (The source does not give the absolute number of marriages.)

Table 1

Percentage of All Marriages in Which the Groom, Bride, or Both Were 65 Years Old or Older, 1949-1959*

Year	Percentage of All Marriages in Which the Groom, Bride, or Both were 65 or Older
1949	1.6
1950	1.7
1951	1.9
1952	2.0
1953	2.0
1954	2.1
1955	2.0
1956	2.1
1957	2.2
1958	2.3
1959	2.4

*Source: Aging (1963:3).

Table 1 also indicates that marriages among the elderly were on the increase during the years shown. Up-to-date data were sought to ascertain whether or not this trend continued. Exactly comparable data were not available, but by using information contained in the Vital Statistics of the United States (1960:1-31 and 1968:1-13), it was determined (Table 2) that the trend toward increasing incidence of marraige among the elderly over time did not continue beyond 1960.

Table 2

Percentage of All Marriages in Which the Bride or Groom Were 65 Years Old or Older, 1951-1967*

Year	Percentage of All Marriages in Which the Bride or Groom were 65 Years Old or Older	
	Bride	Groom
1951	0.6	1.5
1952	0.6	1.6
1953	0.7	1.7
1954	0.7	1.8
1955	0.7	1.7
1956	0.7	1.8
1957	0.8	1.9
1958	0.8	2.0
1959	0.9	2.0
1960	0.9	2.0
1961	0.7	1.8
1962	0.8	2.1
1963	0.8	1.9
1964	0.8	1.9
1965	0.9	2.1
1966	0.8	1.8
1967	0.8	1.7

*Source: Vital Statistics of the U. S. (1968).

Table 2 shows a tendency toward increase up until 1960, then a plateau appears between 1960 and 1965, and it seems that an actual decrease has occurred since 1965. The U. S. Vital Statistics (1964: 1-18, 1965:1-17, 1966:1-14, and 1967:1-14) did give the absolute number of aged marriages for the latest four years for which data are available. In 1964, 10,831 women over 65 got married and 24,920 men over 65 got married, for a total of 35,751. In 1965, the corresponding figures were 12,248 women and 27,328 men for a total of 39,576. In 1966, it was 12,430 women and 26,115 men for a 38,545 total. In 1967, it was 12,401 women and 26,537 men for a 38,938 total.

Both the disengagement and activity theorists point out the gradual role loss of older people in their continually contracting social world. Terms such as role changes, loss of roles, roleless role, rolelessness, and role shrinkage are commonplace in reports of gerontological surveys.

The number of roles a person has is dependent upon the definable positions, or statuses, that he occupies in society. This is true whether it is allowed that each status may have a multiplicity of roles or whether it is given that all the usual role tasks assigned to a particular status are considered as one role. Either position can be meaningful when trying to correlate role loss with disengagement. A man who was a father at age 30 will not lose that status at age 40, 50, 60, or 70. But the role or roles normally attributed to that status will certainly change and, especially in the later years, the tasks inherent in that role will be reduced.

But in this study, such discrimination will not be necessary, for an aged person who gets married assumes a new status, that of spouse, and, thereby, by definition, assumes a new and additional role (or roles) assigned to that status. This role gain, then, theoretically might tend to hold off disengagement.

Moreover, an individual's life space, or the extent of the world relevant to him, is also associated with disengagement. Kurt Back and Kenneth Gergen (in Simpson and McKinney, 1966:289-295) point out that an individual who marries may effectively double his life space. All his mate's relatives, friends, interests, possessions, habits, and hobbies suddenly impinge upon his environment. Therefore, this interference in a formerly constricting life space should slow down disengagement. Hence, the major hypothesis to be tested in this work is:

> New marriages contracted by the elderly tend to have a braking effect on their disengagement from society.

Subhypotheses, working hypotheses, and corollaries will be derived from this central hypothesis. They are presented in the following chapter and are based on the common demographic variables such as marital status, sex, race, residence, number of siblings, number of children, and age of spouse. The method of testing these hypotheses will be described in detail in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Description of the Sample

The experimental universe in this investigation is comprised of those marriages in which either or both partners had attained the age of 60 at the time of the wedding. The age definition follows from viewing disengagement as a process that some people begin earlier than others.[1] Furthermore, age 60 seemed more realistic than 65 because so many people retire now on pension plans before reaching their sixty-fifth birthday and many others under 65 are retired from active work due to disabilities. Moreover, a process, to be adequately studied, should be examined in its early as well as late phases. The universe was further defined as all those marriages with old persons as partners that were recently contracted in Alachua County, Florida. A county setting was selected because the county is the registration unit for marriage licenses. However, it has added advantages in that its clearly defined political boundaries, which can be precisely located on a map, enable the researcher to delimit a specific geosocial area for experimental purposes. The definition of a new marriage, for the purpose of this study, was one that has been in existence for less than five years. In addition, it was decided that the marriage should be at least six months old to insure that some time for adjustment had intervened between the wedding ceremony and the interview. Since the interviewing took place during the summer of 1970, the optimal choice was all those marriages recorded at the courthouse in Alachua County, Florida, from 1966 to 1969, inclusive, who had passed their sixtieth birthday at the time of the marriage and were living in Alachua County or in counties that are contiguous with Alachua County. This plan not only represented parsimony as regards time, money, and effort, but it also should yield the maximum usable results since this nine-county "ridge section" of north-central Florida is relatively homogeneous in terms of geography, economics, and culture.

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[1] Of course, this argument could be carried to the extreme by affirming, and correctly so, that aging begins at conception and from that moment on a course is charted toward the ultimate end of life, so why not lower the age limit even further? While it may be true that the aging process begins with the zygote, the process of disengagement, as stated by the theory guiding the present study, does not begin until after middle age.

This investigation did not include common-law marriages, even though some of our aged citizens are cohabitating under such circumstances (Wikler and Grey, 1968). Wikler and Grey maintained that prior to 1965 a widow who remarried lost all her social security benefits from her deceased husband and that was the salient reason why many senior citizens did not legitimatize their unions. These authors reported that, mainly through their efforts, the federal law was changed in 1965 and that now an elderly person can remarry without losing any of the benefits from the covered employment of a deceased spouse.

Since the data already presented in this study did not show an increase in formally officiated marriage ceremonies since 1965, but instead indicated a slight decrease in the trend, the researcher checked the present Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance regulations.

According to the information contained in the Social Security Claims Manual (July, 1970:410-420), the termination of widowhood can result in financially adverse situations in the following cases:

1. A widow under 60 who remarries a man of any age loses all of her social security benefits.

2. A widow under 60, with dependent children in her care, loses all her share of the OASDI grant upon remarriage to a partner of any age.

3. A beneficiary, because he or she was married at least 20 years to a now deceased worker before they were divorced, loses all social security benefits upon remarriage, regardless of age.

4. A widow who remarries between the ages of 60 and 62 has her social security check automatically reduced by 32 1/2 percent upon remarriage to a man of any age.

5. A widow who remarries after age 62 still has her OASDI check automatically cut 32 1/2 percent, but if she marries a man over 65, she becomes eligible for 50 percent of his award. However, if 50 percent of her present husband's check is less than 32 1/2 percent of her deceased spouse's check or if she marries a nonrecipient of social security, there will be a net loss of income.

This does not take into account the possibly similar negative circumstances that might take place under the many private pension plans, the various federal, state, and local civil service retirement funds, or labor union plans when a surviving beneficiary remarries. It also does not take into account the possibility of a decedent's will being worded so that the surviving spouse is made the trustee of the estate until remarriage with control then going to the eldest offspring. Needless to say, there yet remains ample incentive for many older people not to have their present unions officially known, which brings us to the main methodological reasons for excluding common-law marriages from this study. First, since there are no records, there can be no accurate count, thereby making it impossible to reduce the potential for sampling error, especially in terms of representativeness. Secondly, a field worker interviewing in a business suit and armed with a clipboard and recording pen would present a very clear threat to people living under this condition, which would make effective cooperation extremely doubtful.

Since the investigation is an experimental design aimed at discerning differentials in the nature and rate of disengagement, a comparison sample was used. This was accomplished by considering the nearest neighbor over 60 as a comparison-group subject. The experimental subjects were asked to indicate the house nearest to theirs which had someone 60 years of age or older residing therein. In those cases where such households contained two people over 60, both were interviewed as comparison subjects. If two or more homes with elderly people living in them were equidistant from the home of the experimental subject being interviewed, the nearest house to the north was selected, or if there was none in that direction, the nearest to the south was chosen, or if none there, then west, and so on.

Development of Subhypotheses and Working Hypotheses

The main hypothesis predicted that the experimental group will experience a lesser degree of disengagement than the comparison group. Two subhypotheses were postulated from this. Since the comparison group was selected without regard to marital state, it will consist of people who are married, single, divorced, and widowed, and it is very likely that many subjects in that group will be unmarried. And, since the central assumption of this investigation is that newly contracted marriages have a negative catalytic effect on the disengagement process, then it follows that married aged people in general will be less disengaged than unmarried aged people.

Subhypothesis A: Married subjects in the comparison group will be less disengaged than unmarried subjects in that group.

Since the experimental group will be for the most part living in intact marriages,[2] and, therefore, it is expected that many over-age-60 spouses of both sexes will be in this group, another subhypothesis can be formulated. The most important crystallization point of disengagement for men is retirement, whereas for women it is widowhood (Cumming, 1963:378-389, and Berardo, 1970:11-25).

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[2] Actually, all of the experimental subjects were in intact marriages at the onset, but some separation and divorce was expected by the time the field interviews were conducted.

Remarriage for a woman negates widowhood, while remarriage of an elderly man has little or no effect on his retirement.

> Subhypothesis B: Female subjects in the experimental group will be less disengaged than male subjects in that group.

Working Hypotheses and Corollaries

Each working hypothesis will be accompanied by a corollary. The working hypothesis will be tested with data on the combined subjects in both the experimental and comparison groups together and the corollaries will be tested by noting the strength of relationship in each group when and if the variable being tested by the working hypothesis produced a significant difference over both groups.[3]

Cumming *et al.* (1960:25-32) postulated that disengagement increases as the size of life space lessens and the amount of interaction decreases. Hence it can be deduced that, in general, if an aged person's family of orientation or family of procreation are small, or, if there are fewer people in the immediate area of the aged individual, then both his life space and potential for interaction are diminished.

> Working Hypothesis 1: The larger the number of living children an aged person has, the less effective will be the disengagement process.

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[3] The reason all the hypotheses were not merely numbered is that there is a fundamental difference between the central hypothesis, a subhypothesis, a working hypothesis, and a corollary. They measure different entities; the central hypothesis is concerned with differences within each group separately, the working hypothesis with differences in the combined groups together, and the corollaries will be concerned with the strengths of relationship of any resultant significant differences in either group.

Corollary: If there is a significant difference noted due to the number of living children, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental group than in the comparison group.

Working Hypothesis 2: The larger the number of living siblings an aged person has, the less effective will be the disengagement process.

Corollary: If there is a significant difference noted due to the number of living siblings, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental group than in the comparison group.

Aged citizens living in sparsely populated areas should also have smaller life spaces than those living in cities. A dense population, in addition, should mean a greater concentration of activities and organizations servicing the aged and Rose (1963:131) found that urban elderly have a greater number of friends and acquaintances than rural elderly.

Working Hypothesis 3: The urban aged will be less disengaged than the rural aged.[4]

Corollary: If there is a significant difference noted due to rural or urban residence, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental group than in the comparison.

Since some of the spouses in both groups will be under 60 years of age, it seems reasonable to assume, at least hypothetically, that an older person married to such a younger mate might be in a situation that would act toward the postponement of the older spouse's disengagement.[5]

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[4] All subjects who reside in the city limits of Ocala, Lake City, Palatka, and Gainesville, Florida, were classified as urban. All the subjects living in other areas of the nine counties in this study were classified as rural.

Working Hypothesis 4: Among the married subjects, those whose mates are too young to be subjects will be less disengaged than those subjects whose marriage partners are also subjects.

Corollary: If there is a significant difference noted due to age of spouse, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental group than in the comparison group.

Race may also be a factor in the disengagement rate of senior citizens. Certainly, at age 60, Negroes, in general, are closer to the end of their lives than Caucasians, due to a differential in their life expectancy. The average number of years of life remaining at age 60 for whites was 18.1 in 1966 compared with 16.5 for nonwhites (Vital Statistics of the United States, Mortality Tables, 1966:4-5).

A differential of 1.6 years may not seem great, but it is a measurable and factual difference. Moreover, race is both a common and important demographic variable; hence, it would be wise to test a racial hypothesis in order to determine if this characteristic makes a difference in degree of disengagement.

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[5] This study did not endeavor to focus on the sexual aspects of these marriages. Gerontologists know, of course, that sexuality goes on as long as life goes on (Wikler and Grey, 1968, and Rubin, 1970), but the frequency, the problem of birth control techniques, and many other consequences of sex just do not have the same degree of impact on old couples as is the case among young couples. Moreover, oldsters may be on the defensive as regards queries into their sexual lives and be reluctant to respond. To be sure, it is impossible to completely remove the gender dimension from any interacting dyad, but no items on the interview schedule related in any way to sexual behavior.

Working Hypothesis 5: Blacks will be more disengaged than whites.

Corollary: If there is a significant difference noted due to race, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental group than in the comparison group.

This makes a total of 13 hypotheses to be tested in this work: the major or theoretical hypothesis, two subhypotheses, five working hypotheses, and five corollaries.

Operationalization of Disengagement

The single dependent variable in this treatise is the disengagement process. The most concrete terminology seems to be in conceptualizing disengagement as social isolation vis-a-vis social activity. Cumming *et al.*(1960:33) maintained that the concomitant elements of disengagement are less involvement with work, family, and clubs, but suggested that there may be more involvement in recreation, especially at the early stages of disengagement.

One could argue that in the early stages of disengagement, there may be more involvement with family, friends, and voluntary associations, because retired individuals would have more free time for such activities. Nevertheless, it seems more likely that the reduction of familial interaction begins even before the elderly individual stops working. The involvement was more probably most intense during his early-middle age when his children were living with him, not as intense during his middle-middle age when his children were getting married, and less intense during his late-middle age when his married children were presenting him with new grandchildren. The later interactional processes more than likely involved a gradual and mutual withdrawal.

As regards friends, Blau (1961:429-439) showed that the extent of friendship participation decreases with age.

Turning to voluntary associations, the membership of voluntary associations, like the population of a society, would not like to see their ongoing work and activities disrupted. A death of someone in a position of responsibility for such continuity would be upsetting to the system. To avoid this, the individual should ready himself for total disengagement and the group expects him to do so. Hence, it is more logical that a measure of disengagement would be an aged person's giving up his club membership, and especially yielding any role he may have as an officer in the group.

Cumming, in a later work with Henry (1963:15 and 51), reaffirmed the earlier disengagement definition (Cumming et al., 1960:25-32) that an aged person begins an absorption with self and becomes less and less involved with life around him. However, the authors concluded that, since an older person sees fewer people, less often, and for shorter time periods, it is conceivable that even their recreational activities begin to diminish.

Zborowski (1962:300-305) reported that participant recreational activities definitely decrease with age, especially those situations associated with physical exertion.

Physically, of course, it is anticipated that old people will naturally be limited in the types and amount of recreation pursued, especially as regards highly active dancing, athletics, etc. However, disengagement should result in a reduction of participation even in the things they can do, and, most especially, games, hobbies, and pastimes that require that other people take part.

It can be argued that since disengagement is a preparatory process for death, it might seem likely that the elderly would manifest increased church attendance, readying themselves spiritually in order to die in a state of religious grace. However, Neugarten and Associates (1964:149-150) held that the very old manifest reduced social interaction in all areas of life. They begin demonstrating an increased preoccupation with self and a decreased time and emotional investment with others. Cumming and Henry (1961:91) also concluded that religious interests decrease in older age. Therefore, the present investigation assumes that, if an older person is remaining active in the totality of religiosity by still attending church regularly, teaching Sunday school or catechism classes, or the like, then he is opposing disengagement.

Cumming _et_ _al_. (1960:25-35) and Neugarten and Associates (1964: 149-150) found that older people are more carefree in their personal actions and less evaluative of what other people think of their behavior. As a matter of fact, most older people seem to abstain from intense interpersonal relationships. This produces a nonnormative patterning of behavior, a deviancy which reinforces the old person's desire to reduce the situations in which others exert normative control over him. The result is a more self-centered and idiosyncratic style of living.

One operational measure of disengagement would be the degree of withdrawal from the dimensions of social involvement and whether the subject perceives such noninvolvement. The elements of social involvement that were examined in this study are: 1. Work, 2. Family, 3. Friends, 4. Clubs, 5. Church, 6. Number of others in household, 7. Neighbors, 8. Interaction with specific people, 9. A role count based on these dimensions, and 10. A perceived life space measure which asks the respondent to compare his present level of social involvement with relatives, friends, church, clubs, and people in general with his level of such activities when he was forty-five years old.

Instrument Schedules

Two instruments of long standing in gerontology, each previously validated in the field, were utilized. One is the measurements of engagement developed by Cumming and Henry and found in Appendix 2 of their book, Growing Old (1961:243-256). The exact scales used are entitled: "Lifespace Measure," "Church and Voluntary Organization Participation," "Role Count," and "Perceived Lifespace." The other is the "Life Satisfaction Index A" (LSIA) developed by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin (Havighurst, 1961:312-315). The purpose of the latter tool is merely to determine if there is a difference in general life satisfaction between the two groups rather than test any particular hypothesis. This does not mean that there is no connection between engagement and life satisfaction. Indeed, in the accompanying tables of the McKain monograph (1969:7-8) the majority of the aged newlyweds scored in the highest bracket of life satisfaction. But in another study of older people in general (Maddox, 1964:121-122), it was shown that life satisfaction does not change with increasing age, even in subjects who demonstrate decreasing activity with age. At any rate, the determination of such a relationship is outside the purview of this study. But if a significant difference is noted on the variable disengagement among the subjects and this is correlated with the results of the LSIA, then this would act as a test of the relationship.

The instrument also contained additional items defining the independent variables and personal background (see Appendix). In addition, seven open-ended probes aimed at eliciting some information about their marriage were asked of the newly married couples who indicated that they would not mind answering them. The purpose of these items was to serve as a guide for future research rather than test any of the hypotheses.

The same schedule was administered to the respondents in both the experimental and comparison groups. In those cases where both spouses were over 60, the husband and wife were interviewed during the same visit, but separately. However, the seven queries on marriage were administered together to couples who were willing to respond to them; if their responses were different, this was noted.

Analysis of the Marriage Record Data

A total of 97 marriages were legitimized in the nine-county area wherein either the bride or groom or both were 60 years of age or over, during the time span indicated.[6] Some useful information was already on the marriage license applications. These data include those persons who could not later be located to be included in the experimental population. Data were also found on both marital partners which included age, race, community of residence at the time of application, previous marital status, number of previous marriages, how the last union ended, and if the marriage just previous was terminated by divorce, when and where.

The number and percentage of those formalized unions are presented in Table 3. The figures from Alachua County, Florida, depicted

Table 3

The Number of all Marriages and the Number and Percentage of Marriages with at Least One of the Partners over 60 Recorded in Alachua County, Florida, 1966-1969, Inclusive

Year	Number of Marriages	Number and Percentage of Marriages with at Least One of the Partners over 60	
		Number	Percentage
1966	901	25	2.8
1967	924	18	1.9
1968	1,114	30	2.7
1969	1,170	24	2.1
Total	4,109	97	2.4

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[6] Those nine counties are: Alachua, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Gilchrist, Levy, Marion, Putnam, and Union, although no subjects were found to be residing in Union County.

in Table 3 confirm the evaluation that the incidence of aged marriages seems to have reached some sort of erratic plateau and that the decrease since 1966 suggested in Table 2 probably was only a slight rill in that plateau.

The analysis of the applications yielded some other interesting characteristics of the population.

First, 63 or 65 percent of the couples were white, and 34 or 35 percent of the couples were black. There were no interracial marriages among these aged newlyweds.

Of the 194 partners in these weddings, 180 or 93 percent had been married before. Of these, 70 percent had only one previous marriage; 18 percent had two marriages before this one; 3 percent had three marriages previously, 1 1/2 percent were starting their fifth marriage at this time; and 1/2 percent (1 case) was entering his sixth marriage. More surprising is that 7 percent (14 cases) of the population had never been married before. None of the never-married grooms was uniting with any of the never-married brides.

It would seem because of our definition that only one of the mates need be over 60 that, perhaps, most of the never-marrieds would be partners who had not yet attained age 60; but, in fact, 8 of the 14 never-married-before group were 61 years of age or older.

Logic might also lead us to suspect that the majority of the never-marrieds would be brides; but, again, as a matter of fact, 8 of the 14 never-married-before group were grooms. Of course, it was not the same eight who were over 61 years of age. Three of the six of the never-married-before groups who were under 60 years of age were grooms.

Reason might point us toward the assumption that Negroes, due to their increased chance of being in a previous unrecorded common-law marraige, would compose most of the officially never-married-before group; however, Negroes accounted for only half of that group. Of these seven Negroes, five were over 60 and two were under 60, three were grooms and four were brides. No Negro grooms were under 60, while two of the Negro brides were over 60 in the never-married-before group.

Of the 180 subjects who did have previous marriages, their most recent unions were ended by death 119 times, by divorce 60 times, and only one subject terminated his last marriage by annulment. (He is not one of the 14 never-marrieds discussed in the foregoing paragraphs because he had been married twice before.) This is in agreement with Barnard (1956:50-66), who found that most previous marraiges among the older age groups ended in widowhood.

The surprisingly broad age range of persons involved in these marriages can be noted in Table 4. The modal age bracket was the 60-to-64-year-old group with the total distribution being slightly skewed toward the older age groupings with 71 cases falling in the 65 or older categories and 58 cases being under the age of 60.

Tremendous variation existed in the relative ages of those who entered the marriages under study, as can be seen by an examination of Table 5. The four persons who were of the same age at the time of

Table 4

Distribution by Age of the Partners in Marriages with at Least One of the Partners over Age 60 Recorded in Alachua County, Florida, 1966-1969, Inclusive

Age Group	Number of Cases
25-29	2
30-34	0
35-39	2
40-44	6
45-49	7
50-54	14
55-59	27
60-64	65
65-69	43
70-74	19
75-79	7
80-84	1
85-89	0
90-94	1
Sum	194

Table 5

Marriages in Which at Least One of the Partners Was over Age 60 According to Age Difference Between Performed in Alachua County, Florida, 1966-1969, Inclusive

Age Diff. in Years	Number of Cases	Age Diff. in Years	Number of Cases	Age Diff. in Years	Number of Cases
0	4	14	6	28	2
1	4	15	2	29	0
2	6	16	1	30	1
3	8	17	0	31	0
4	8	18	4	32	0
5	11	19	2	33	1
6	9	20	1	34	0
7	4	21	2	35	0
8	3	22	1	36	0
9	3	23	1	37	0
10	3	24	0	38	1
11	2	25	0	39	0
12	6	26	0	40	0
13	0	27	1	Sum	97

the marriage contrasted sharply with the three couples whose age differential was 30 years or more.

The youngest subject in the group was a 27-year-old female married to a 65-year-old male; this union also accounted for the widest age gap (38 years). A 29-year-old woman, the second youngest subject, united to a 61-year-old man presented the second largest age difference (33 years). Two 35-year-old women married one 63- and one 65-year-old man, respectively. All four of these couples were Negro.

The oldest subject in the experimental population was a 91-year-old male who married a 64-year-old woman. The second oldest subject, an 83-year-old man, took a 69-year-old wife. Both of these pairs were Negro.

When there was an age difference, it was not always the groom being older than the bride. In 18 of the 97 couples (roughly 20 percent), as depicted in Table 6, the brides were older than the grooms. McKain (1969:15) found that 15 percent of his brides were older than their grooms. In the cases of the 14- and 18-year spread, shown in Table 6, the former was a 47-year-old man married to a 61-year-old woman and the latter was a 59-year-old man wedded to a 77-year-old lady. Both of these couples were Caucasian.

Table 6

Differences in Ages of the Married Pair in the Cases Where the Brides Were Older Than the Grooms in Marriages in Which at Least One of the Partners Was over Age 60, Performed in Alachua County, Florida, 1966-1969, Inclusive

Years Older	Number of Cases
1	2
2	3
3	2
4	2
5	3
6	1
7	1
8	2
14	1
18	1
Sum	18

Unfortunately, the marriage license application forms in Florida give only the locality of the bride and groom prior to the ceremony and not any information on where the couple will be residing after the marriage.

The following lists were searched in an effort to find the current addresses of the subjects: the city directories, utilities billing lists, and telephone directories of the communities in the research area, the list of welfare clients of the Department of Social Services for the counties involved, and the regional list of public assistance recipients of the State of Florida Division of Family Services.

The addresses of some of the subjects who lived farther away were acquired by utilizing the telephone, dialing 1, then the area code, then 555-1212. The information operator, upon request, always supplied the street address where the telephone in that given party's name was located.

Many addresses were still not ascertained, so a letter was sent in care of the postmaster of each subject's last community of residence with instructions to deliver it to that subject. Each of these letters had a return postcard enclosed in it requesting the subject to write down his present address and drop the card in a mailbox. If these cards were not returned, a personal visit was made to every post office in the nine-county area to secure existing or forwarding addresses for the remaining subjects if any were available.

When this procedure failed to reveal the whereabouts of all the remaining unknowns, inquiry was made at various points such as general stores and service stations in those towns in an attempt to get a lead on those remaining cases.

Information on the location of some subjects was picked up in each step of the search. In addition, some postmasters and townspeople were able to say definitely that some of the subjects had moved but for one reason or another had told no one where they had gone.

Finally, a check was made to see if any of the subjects about whom nothing was known were deceased. This was accomplished by inquiry to the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Division of Health, in Jacksonville, Florida.

Of the 97 legitimatized unions in the area and time span indicated, the present whereabouts of the partners 60 years old or older is as follows:

	Number of Cases	Balance
Total number of marriages involving people 60 years of age or older married in Alachua County, Florida, during the years 1966-1969, inclusive.	136	136
Subjects from communities in Florida outside the experimental area who apparently came to Alachua County for the wedding and then returned to those communities after the ceremony.	22	114
Subjects from states other than Florida who apparently came to Alachua County for the wedding and then returned to those states.	8	106

(continued)	Number of Cases	Balance
Subjects from communities inside the experimental area who moved to other Florida communities outside the nine-county area after the wedding.	5	101
Subjects from Florida communities inside the nine-county area who moved to other states after the wedding ceremony.	3	98
Deceased subjects.	6	92
Subjects whose whereabouts remain unknown despite exhaustive efforts.	15	77

Our experimental sample, therefore, consists of 77 subjects.

A total of 71 experimental subjects allowed the interviews to be completed. This represents a 92.2 percent response rate. A total of 60 elderly neighbors were interviewed as comparison subjects, representing a response rate of 95.2 percent.

The investigation was carried out by personal interviews in the homes of the subjects. The field work was accomplished during the months of June, July, and August, 1970.

Of the nine refusals, two were incomplete interviews. The results of these two were not tabulated with the 131 completed interviews. One of the incompletes resulted at the very end of the interview when the subject suddently reversed his desire to have the information recorded and demanded that the questionnaire be surrendered to him, he immediately tore it up. The interviewer outside later filled in a blank form to the best of his recollection. The other incomplete occurred about one-third of the way through the interview when the subject became too ill to go on and his wife would not allow the questioning to continue that day or on any of the follow-up visits.

Generally speaking, however, the cooperation of the subjects was very good indeed.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

As was stated in Chapter Two, 71 elderly newlyweds were chosen as the experimental sample and 60 elderly persons were selected as a comparison group. All the subjects were interviewed in their own homes and their responses to certain questions put to them are tabulated and analyzed in this chapter.

Characteristics of the Research Samples

Initially, the educational level of the subjects in both groups is presented (Table 7). This distribution demonstrates the range of formal schooling among the respondents. The data indicate that the experimental group had a higher percentage of subjects with no schooling, schooling to the fifth grade, and advanced educations, while the subjects in the comparison group led in the classifications from a sixth grade education to graduation from high school.

Information was also collected on the primary lifetime occupations of the subjects and these data are found in Table 8. The two groups appear to be nearly evenly distributed on this variable, although the comparison group had more skilled craftsmen while the experimental group had more lower level professionals. The higher prestige of the lower level professionals is probably offset by the greater salary expectation of the skilled craftsmen, hence there

Table 7

The Educational Levels of the Experimental and Comparison Groups

Educational Level	Experimental Group (N=71) (%)	(Cum. %)	Comparison Group (N=60) (%)	(Cum. %)
No Formal Schooling	8.5	(8.5)	5.0	(5.0)
First Grade Attended to Fifth Grade Completed	29.6	(38.1)	21.7	(26.7)
Sixth Grade Attended to Eighth Grade Completed	21.1	(59.2)	31.7	(58.4)
High School Attended But Not Completed	15.5	(74.7)	18.3	(76.7)
High School Graduate	9.9	(84.6)	15.0	(91.7)
Some Tertiary Education	15.4	(100.0)	8.3	(100.0)

Table 8

The Primary Lifetime Occupations of the Experimental and Comparison Groups[1]

Primary Lifetime Occupation	Experimental Group (N=71) (%)	(Cum. %)	Comparison Group (N=60) (%)	(Cum. %)*
Housewife	28.2	(28.2)	30.0	(30.0)
Unskilled Laborer	18.3	(46.5)	18.3	(48.3)
Service Occupations	11.3	(57.8)	10.0	(58.3)
Semiskilled Worker	4.2	(62.0)	3.3	(61.6)
Clerical and Sales Categories	7.0	(69.0)	5.0	(66.6)
Skilled Craftsman	7.0	(76.0)	18.3	(84.9)
Farm Owner or Self-Employed	8.5	(84.5)	6.7	(91.6)
Lower Professional	11.3	(95.8)	5.0	(96.5)
Upper Professional	4.2	(100.0)	3.3	(99.9)

*Total cumulative percentage does not equal 100.0 due to rounding.

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[1] Unskilled workers = field and orchard workers, tenant farmers, maids.
Service occupations = restaurant and hotel employees, night watchmen, railroad porters, military careerman, practical nurses.
Semiskilled workers = general construction workers, truck drivers, factory assembly line workers.
Clerical and sales = postal clerks, branch salesmen, store clerks, office clerks, railroad conductors, secretaries.
Skilled craftsmen = electricians, carpenters, brick layers, mechanics, stone masons.
Lower professionals = registered nurses, preachers, school teachers.
Upper professionals = lawyers and college professors.

appears to be no great socioeconomic imbalance between the two groups which might introduce a sampling bias.

The data on the present employment statuses of both groups are presented in Table 9. There is little difference between the two groups on most of the classifications but a disproportionate share of the comparison group was fully retired and nearly five times as many experimental group subjects were still working full-time at their primary lifetime occupations. The latter may be due to the fact that all the experimental subjects were involved in building a new marriage

Table 9

The Present Employment Statuses of the Experimental and Comparison Groups

Present Employment Status	Experimental Group (N=71) (%)	(Cum.%)	Comparison Group (N=60) (%)	(Cum. %)
Housewife	28.2	(28.2)	30.0	(30.0)
Still Employed Full-Time at Primary Life Occupation	31.0	(59.2)	6.7	(36.7)
Retired from Primary Lifetime Occupation but Still Working Part-Time In It	2.8	(62.0)	5.0	(41.7)
Retired from Primary Lifetime Occupation but Now Working Full-Time in Another Occupation	2.8	(64.8)	1.7	(43.4)
Retired from Primary Lifetime Occupation but Now Working Part-Time in Another Occupation	0.0	(64.8)	3.3)	(46.7)
Fully Retired from Salaried Work	35.2	(100.0)	53.3	(100.0)

whereas nearly half of the comparison group subjects were not married. It may also be true that marriage or remarriage may have been facilitated because the subject had employment. The marital statuses of the subjects in both groups appear in Table 10. As was expected, most of the experimental group was still in a married state. Because they were originally selected on the basis of their being recently married, they should not be compared with the national figures as to the marital statuses of old people in general. However, the comparison group seems to indicate that the aged people in the nine-county area of Florida roughly correspond to the marital statuses of other aged people in the United States. According to official estimates, 52 percent of all people over 65 years of age are married and 39 percent are widowed (Aging, 1969:20). Since the age floor in this study is 60, it is expected that slightly more of the subjects would be still married and slightly fewer would be widowed.

Table 10

The Marital Statuses of the Experimental and Comparison Groups

Marital Status	Experimental Group (N=71) (%)	Experimental Group (N=71) (Cum.%)	Comparison Group (N=60) (%)	Comparison Group (N=60) (Cum. %)
Married	85.9	(85.9)	60.0	(60.0)
Separated	1.4	(87.3)	0.0	(60.0)
Widowed	8.5	(95.8)	37.5	(96.7)
Divorced	4.2	(100.0)	3.3	(100.0)

Regarding sex, 41 subjects in the experimental group were males and 30 were females. This does not indicate a reversal in the aged mortality trend but simply that many males in the experimental group were married to women who were too young to be subjects.

In the comparison group, slightly over 50 percent (31 subjects) were females. The figure for the whole United States 65 years old or older is 57 percent female (Aging, 1969:20). But it is expected that there would be a slightly higher percentage of males still alive in this study's comparison group, since the age floor for selection was lower by five years.

Of the total 131 experimental and comparison group subjects, 74 or 56.5 percent were white and 57 or 43.5 percent were black. In the experimental group, 54.9 percent were white while in the comparison group 58.3 percent were white. The corresponding datum for the State of Florida was 84.1 percent white and for the nine-county study area, which had 237,430 whites out of a total population of 306,437, it was 77.4 percent white (U. S. Census, 1970:3-19). This discrepancy can be partially accounted for by the fact that eight of the nine refusals were by white persons; thus, if the samples had remained intact, 59 percent of the subjects would have been white. More of this disparity is resolved by the fact that in Alachua County, Florida, where most of the sample units were.drawn, only 69 percent of the population over 60 years of age was white (U. S. Census, 1960:11-89). In addition, the experimental group taken by itself would have been 63.4 percent white if it had remained intact since all six refusals in that group were by whites. But all these explanations notwithstanding, it still remains true that a disproportionate share of those people 60 years old or older who married in Alachua County, Florida, during the years 1966 to 1969, inclusive, were black, although the difference is not great.

Testing of the Central Hypothesis

The major hypothesis of this work was that a new marriage, contracted late in life, will retard the disengagement process. The three measures of engagement used, as outlined previously, were lifespace measure f score, role count, and perceived lifespace score (see Appendix).

The decision was made that there must be a significant difference in all three measures to reject the null hypothesis. Although each of the tests, in itself, measures a dimension of disengagement, they have been used in combination in past research; moreover, the author desired that the testing be rigid as possible. However, when important variations are noted on a single measure, they are discussed at length. A significant difference in the results of two out of three measures is considered inconclusive. The null hypothesis is not rejected if a significant difference is noted in only one or none of the measures.[2]

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[2] To determine if the differences in any of the three measures were statistically significant, the Kolmogorow-Smirnov runs test for chi square was used (Blalock, 1960:203-206). In those cases where a statistical significance was noted, the contingency coefficient (C)

In the statistical analyses of all data, the lowest acceptable level of confidence is the usual .05 level. Any noted differences are not considered significant at any lower confidence level; but any clearly visible differences, albeit not statistically significant, are discussed.

The first of the three measures was the lifespace measure frequency (or f) score. This was based on: 1) the number of others in the household (which was multiplied by 30); 2) the number of close relatives, neighbors, and friends (which was multiplied by 30 if seen daily, by 4 if seen weekly, etc.); 3) the number of coworkers one talks to on the job, if the respondent is still employed (which was multiplied by 20); and 4) the number of other people seen per week for certain specific purposes (which was multiplied by 4). The sum became the total lifespace f score.

The results of this first test are presented in Table 11, which reflects a visible relationship in the direction predicted, although the distributions failed to attain statistical significance. Upon close inspection, albeit the relationship was not statistically significant, the data in the table reveal that nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of the comparison group respondents were concentrated in the lowest two interactional columns while less than half (46 percent) of the experimental group respondents were positioned there. This

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was computed to ascertain if the strength of relationship was greater in the experimental than in the comparison group (Edwards, 1964:38).

Table 11

The Lifespace Measure f Scores of the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

	Total f Score on Lifespace Measure								
Group	0-99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500-999	1000-1999	2000 & Over	Total
Experimental (N = 71)	18.3 (18.3)	28.2 (46.5)	19.7 (66.2)	4.2 (70.4)	8.5 (78.9)	12.7 (91.6)	5.6 (97.2)	2.8 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Comparison (N = 60)	30.0 (30.0)	33.3 (63.3)	15.0 (78.3)	5.0 (83.3)	8.3 (91.6)	1.7 (93.3)	3.3 (96.6)	3.4 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

$X^2 = 3.9$ df = 7 $p > .05$

*The figures in parentheses represent cumulative percentages clustering by the comparison group subjects in the lower columns continued until the scores reached 300, with over three-fourths of the comparison group versus less than two-thirds of the experimental group accounted for at that level. With the majority of the experimental group scoring between 200 and 1,000 on the lifespace measure and the majority of the comparison group scoring below 200, it does seem to be true that the newlywed aged subjects interacted more with others in the house, relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and other specific people in general than did the other aged subjects in the study.

The second of three measures of engagement used in this study was the total role count. The total role count was based on: 1) number in household (scored zero if respondent lives alone, one point if one other lives with him, and two points if two or more others live there); 2) number of close friends, relatives, and neighbors (scored one point for any, zero for none); 3) specific people (scored one point if any are seen, zero for none); 4) fellow workers (scored one point if respondent is employed at all, none if no longer working), 5) church (scored one point if attends twice a month or oftener, zero if attends less frequently); and 6) clubs (scored one point if a member of any, zero if a member of none). The sum becomes the role count. The possible range is 0 to 9. However, no one in this study had a zero role count.

The results of the role count test (Table 12) tended to support the hypothesis. Even though the differences failed to attain

Table 12

The Total Role Counts of the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Total Role Count									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Exp.+ (N=71)	1.4 (1.4)	0.0 (1.4)	4.2 (5.6)	7.0 (12.6)	15.5 (28.1)	39.4 (67.5)	22.5 (90.0)	8.5 (98.5)	1.4 (100.0)	99.9 (99.9)
Comp. (N=60)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	6.7 (6.7)	23.3 (30.0)	28.3 (58.3)	16.7 (75.0)	20.0 (95.0)	5.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

$X^2 = 11.9$ df = 8 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

statistical significance, it does appear that the aged newlyweds had more roles as measured by number of close friends, relatives, neighbors, friends, coworkers, household members, along with church and club activities than had the other aged persons tested in this study. While little difference can be noted in the first two columns, the majority of the comparison group placed in the middle columns, 3, 4, and 5, whereas the majority of the experimental group fell in the highest columns, 6, 7, 8, and 9. This does seem to indicate that the newlywed aged subjects appear to have more roles than the other aged subjects in this study. It can also be observed that 77.4 percent of the responses for the experimental group fell in the 5-through-7 classes as against only 65.0 percent for the comparison group; and that while 58.3 percent, or well over half, of the subjects in the comparison group reported 5 roles or fewer, only 28.1 percent, or somewhat more than a fourth of those in the experimental group, were limited to that number of roles. All this evidence points in the direction of confirmation of the hypotheses, even though statistically the possibility of sampling variability as the explanation cannot be ruled out.

The third measure of engagement used in this study was the perceived lifespace score. The perceived lifespace score was based on the subject's evaluation of his interactional level at age forty-five in comparison with his present level. The respondent scored more points if more active now, some points if activity level remained about the same, and fewer points if he was more active in the past. The possible range was from 9 to 19 (see Appendix).

The results of the perceived lifespace test (Table 13) demonstrate a relationship in the predicted direction. Although the two groups were fairly evenly distributed throughout the middle columns, the comparison group had a disproportionate number in the lower two columns, while the experimental group subjects had a larger share in the two higher columns. It does appear from the data that when the respondents in both samples were asked to give their perception of the difference in their activity levels now compared to these levels at age forty-five, the aged newlywed subjects perceived themselves as relatively more active than did the rest of the elderly respondents at their present ages, though, again, the relationship did not achieve statistical significance.

Since the differences between the experimental and comparison groups could not be shown to be statistically significant in any of the

Table 13

The Total Perceived Lifespace Scores of the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Total Perceived Lifespace Score								Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16-19	
Exp. (N=71)	12.7 (12.7)	22.5 (35.2)	22.5 (57.7)	15.5 (73.2)	8.5 (81.7)	9.9 (91.6)	4.2 (95.8)	4.2 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Comp. (N=60)	23.3 (23.3)	23.3 (46.6)	21.7 (68.3)	13.3 (81.6)	3.3 (84.9)	11.7 (96.6)	1.7 (98.3)	1.7 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

$X^2 = 1.7$ df = 7 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

three measure of disengagement, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. However, there was a tendency in the data in all three tests toward confirmation of the central hypothesis.

Testing of the Subhypotheses

Subhypothesis A stipulated that married subjects in the comparison group would be more engaged than unmarried subjects in that group.

The responses of these subjects were tabulated and analyzed in the same manner as was the case with the central hypothesis. For this analysis, the widowed, divorced, and separated columns shown in Table 10 were collapsed into a single unmarried category. For the comparison group, then, this means 36 respondents (60%) are classified as married and 24 respondents (40%) as unmarried subjects.

Again the first measure used was the lifespace f score. A study of the total f score (Table 14) shows that the data demonstrate a

Table 14

The Lifespace Measure f Scores of the Married and Unmarried Subjects in the Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Total f Score on Lifespace Measure						Total
	0-99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500 & over	
Married (N=36)	22.2 (22.2)	36.1 (58.3)	16.7 (75.0)	2.8 (77.8)	11.1 (89.9)	11.1 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Unmarried (N=24)	41.7 (41.7)	29.9 (71.6)	12.6 (84.2)	8.4 (92.6)	4.2 (96.8)	4.2 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

$X^2 = 2.2$ df = 5 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

relationship in the direction predicted. Nearly twice the percentage of unmarried subjects as married ones scored in the very lowest lifespace category while the incidence of married subjects in the scoring columns of 200 and above was nearly double that of unmarried subjects. Hence, it does appear that the married subjects in the comparison group interact slightly more with other people in general than do the unmarried subjects in that group, but again the relationship was not strong enough to be significant statistically.

The role count results presented in Table 15 reveal a tendency for the data on this measure to offer support for the hypothesis. The majority of the unmarried subjects fell in the lower three columns and the majority of the married subjects in the upper three; thus, the data indicate that the married subjects on the average have more close friends,

Table 15

The Total Role Counts of the Married and Unmarried Subjects in the Comparison Group (Percentages)*

Marital Status	Total Role Count						Total
	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Married (N=36)	8.3 (8.3)	8.3 (16.6)	27.8 (44.4)	16.7 (61.1)	30.6 (91.7)	8.3 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Unmarried+ (N=24)	4.2 (4.2)	45.2 (49.4)	29.9 (79.3)	16.8 (96.1)	4.2 (100.3)	0.0 (100.3)	100.3 (100.3)

$X^2 = 7.7$ df = 5 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

specific acquaintances, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, others in the house, and are more active in clubs and church than the unmarried subjects in the comparison group even though the distributions were not sufficiently different to be significant at the acceptable level of confidence.

None of the comparison group scored higher than 16 on the perceived lifespace measure (Table 16). The distributions show that the chances of an unmarried subject being in the lowest scored column were more than 50 percent greater than for a married subject and the incidence of married subjects in the uppermost category was considerably higher than that of the unmarried subjects. Hence, the elderly married comparison group subjects perceive themselves to be relatively more active now than do the elderly unmarried subjects in that group. The

Table 16

Total Perceived Lifespace Scores of the Married and Unmarried Subjects in the Comparison Group (Percentages)*

Marital Status	Total Perceived Lifespace Score							Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15 & 16	
Married (N=36)	19.4 (19.4)	25.0 (44.4)	27.8 (72.2)	11.1 (83.3)	2.8 (86.1)	8.3 (94.4)	5.6 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Un-married+ (N=24)	29.9 (29.9)	20.8 (50.7)	12.6 (63.3)	16.8 (80.1)	4.2 (84.3)	16.8 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	101.1 (101.1)

$X^2 = 6.9$ df = 6 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

difference was insufficient to be significant at the acceptable confidence level, however.

Since a difference in marital status in the comparison group was not shown to be significant in any of the three measures of disengagement, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Again, however, the data demonstrated a tendency in all three tests toward confirming the hypothesis.

Subhypothesis B maintained that female subjects in the experimental group will be more engaged than male subjects in that group.

The lifespace measure results are presented in Table 17. The distributions were not significantly different. A study of the data within the table shows that they appear neither to confirm nor to deny this inconclusiveness.

Table 17

The Lifespace Measure f Scores of the Male and Female Subjects in the Experimental Group (Percentages)*

Sex	Total f Score on Lifespace Measure								Total
	0-99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500-999	1000-1999	2000 & Over	
Male+	17.1	22.0	22.0	7.3	4.9	19.5	4.9	2.4	100.1
(N=41)	(17.1)	(39.1)	(61.1)	(68.4)	(73.3)	(92.8)	(97.7)	(100.0)	(100.1)
Female	20.0	36.7	16.7	0.0	13.3	3.3	6.7	3.3	100.0
(N=30)	(20.0)	(56.7)	(73.4)	(73.4)	(86.7)	(90.0)	(96.7)	(100.0)	(100.0)

$X^2 = 2.1$ df = 7 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The role count by sex is depicted in Table 18. The differences between the distributions were not statistically significant. The percentage of males was greater in the lower three role count columns but

Table 18

The Total Role Counts of the Male and Female Subjects in the Experimental Group (Percentages)*

Sex	Total Role Count									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Male+	2.4	0.0	4.9	7.3	9.8	34.1	26.8	12.2	2.4	99.9
(N=41)	(2.4)	(2.4)	(7.3)	(14.6)	(24.4)	(58.5)	(85.3)	(97.5)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Female	0.0	0.0	3.3	6.7	23.3	46.7	16.7	3.3	0.0	100.0
(N=30)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(3.3)	(10.0)	(33.3)	(80.0)	(96.7)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

$X^2 = 3.2$ df = 8 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentage does not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

was also greater in the three higher role count columns. The percentage of females was greater in the middle three role count columns. The weight of the extremes cancels out the weight of the mean, and the data remain inconclusive.

The perceived lifespace score by sex is presented in Table 19.

Table 19

The Total Perceived Lifespace Scores of the Male and Female Subjects in the Experimental Group (Percentages)*

Sex	Total Perceived Lifespace Score								Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16-19	
Male+ (N=41)	14.6 (14.5)	22.0 (36.6)	26.8 (63.4)	19.5 (82.9)	2.4 (85.3)	4.9 (90.2)	4.9 (95.1)	4.9 (100.0)	99.9 (100.0)
Female (N=30)	10.0 (10.0)	23.3 (33.3)	16.7 (50.0)	10.0 (60.0)	16.7 (76.7)	16.7 (93.4)	3.3 (96.7)	3.3 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

$X^2 = 3.6$ df = 7 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentage does not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

As was the case with the two previous tabulations, the variances between distributions were not significant statistically and the data in the table, when studied, also appear neither to confirm nor to deny this inconclusiveness.

A difference in sex did not prove to be a significant variable in any of the three measures of engagement, hence the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Moreover, the data, after close scrutiny, also proved inconclusive.

Testing of the Working Hypotheses and Corollaries

The first working hypothesis stipulated that the greater the number of living children the aged subjects have in either group, the less will be their disengagement. The initial corollary stipulated that, if the null hypothesis can be rejected, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental group than in the comparison group. A breakdown of the number of living children in both groups is presented in Table 20. As can be seen, more of the experimental group had no children. The experimental group also had a greater incidence of four or more children with 22.4 percent distributed in those columns with 10.1 percent for the comparison group.

Table 20

Number of Living Children in the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Number of Living Children										Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 or More	
Exp.+ (N=71)	25.4 (25.4)	18.3 (43.7)	28.2 (71.9)	5.6 (77.5)	7.0 (84.5)	2.8 (87.3)	1.4 (88.9)	2.8 (91.5)	2.8 (94.3)	5.6 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)
Comp. (N=60)	15.0 (15.0)	33.3 (48.3)	28.3 (76.6)	13.3 (89.9)	3.3 (93.2)	1.7 (94.9)	0.0 (94.9)	1.7 (96.6)	1.7 (98.3)	1.7 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The last five columns are collapsed into a single "5 or more" category for Tables 21, 22, and 23.

Table 21

Total Lifespace Measure f Score by Number of Living Children for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Number of Living Children	Group	Total Lifespace Measure f Score						
		0-99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500 & Over	Total
0	Experimental (N=18)	38.9 (39.9)	33.3 (73.2)	0.0 (73.2)	0.0 (73.2)	5.6 (78.8)	22.2 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison+ (N=9)	44.4 (44.4)	33.3 (77.7)	11.1 (88.8)	0.0 (88.8)	0.0 (88.8)	11.1 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)
1	Experimental (N=13)	7.7 (7.7)	46.2 (53.9)	7.7 (61.6)	7.7 (69.3)	15.4 (84.7)	15.4 (100.1)	100.1 (100.1)
	Comparison (N=20)	35.0 (35.0)	25.0 (60.0)	15.0 (75.0)	10.0 (85.0)	5.0 (90.0)	10.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
2	Experimental (N=20)	20.0 (20.0)	20.0 (40.0)	30.0 (70.0)	0.0 (70.0)	10.0 (80.0)	20.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison (N=17)	23.5 (23.5)	41.2 (64.7)	23.5 (88.2)	5.9 (94.1)	5.9 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

3	Experimental (N=4)	0.0 (0.0)	50.0 (50.0)	25.0 (75.0)	0.0 (75.0)	0.0 (75.0)	25.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison (N=8)	25.0 (25.0)	37.5 (62.5)	0.0 (62.5)	0.0 (62.5)	12.5 (75.0)	25.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
4	Experimental (N=5)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	40.0 (40.0)	0.0 (0.0)	20.0 (60.0)	40.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison (N=2)	50.0 (50.0)	50.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
5 or more	Experimental+ (N=11)	9.0 (9.0)	18.0 (27.0)	36.0 (63.0)	18.0 (81.0)	0.0 (81.0)	18.0 (99.0)	99.0 (99.0)
	Comparison (N=4)	0.0 (0.0)	25.0 (25.0)	25.0 (50.0)	0.0 (50.0)	50.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

Both Groups: $X^2 = 24.9$ df = 25 $p > .05$
Experimental Group: $X^2 = 21.6$ df = 25 $p > .05$
Comparison Group: $X^2 = 22.8$ df = 25 $p > .05$
*Figures in parentheses represent cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 22

Total Role Count by Number of Living Children for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Number of Living Children	Group	Total Role Count									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
0	Experimental+ (N=18)	5.6 (5.6)	0.0 (5.6)	11.1 (16.2)	16.7 (35.4)	22.2 (55.6)	27.8 (83.4)	16.7 (100.1)	0.0 (100.1)	0.0 (100.1)	100.1 (100.1)
	Comparison+ (N=9)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	44.4 (44.4)	22.2 (66.6)	22.2 (88.8)	11.1 (99.9)	0.0 (99.9)	0.0 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)
1	Experimental+ (N=13)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	7.7 (7.7)	0.0 (7.7)	23.1 (30.8)	38.5 (69.3)	15.4 (84.7)	15.4 (100.1)	0.0 (100.1)	100.1 (100.1)
	Comparison (N=20)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	15.0 (15.0)	20.0 (35.0)	25.0 (60.0)	10.0 (70.0)	20.0 (90.0)	10.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
2	Experimental (N=20)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	5.0 (5.0)	15.0 (20.0)	35.0 (55.0)	25.0 (80.0)	15.0 (95.0)	5.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison (N=17)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	23.5 (23.5)	17.6 (41.1)	35.3 (76.4)	23.5 (99.9)	0.0 (99.9)	0.0 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)

3	Experimental (N=4)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	50.0 (50.0)	50.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison (N=8)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	12.5 (12.5)	0.0 (12.5)	62.5 (75.0)	0.0 (75.0)	12.5 (87.5)	12.5 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
4	Experimental (N=5)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	80.0 (80.0)	0.0 (80.0)	20.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison (N=2)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	50.0 (50.0)	0.0 (50.0)	0.0 (50.0)	50.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
5 or more	Experimental+ (N=11)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	9.0 (9.0)	9.0 (18.0)	45.0 (63.0)	36.0 (99.0)	0.0 (99.0)	0.0 (99.0)	99.0 (99.0)
	Comparison (N=4)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	25.0 (25.0)	50.0 (75.0)	0.0 (75.0)	25.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

Both Groups: $X^2 = 35.3$ df = 40 $p > .05$
Experimental Group: $X^2 = 39.1$ df = 40 $p > .05$
Comparison Group: $X^2 = 37.5$ df = 40 $p > .05$
*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 23

Total Perceived Lifespace Score by Number of Living Children for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Number of Living Children	Group	Total Perceived Lifespace Score							
		9	10	11	12	13	14	15-16	Total
0	Experimental+	16.7	16.7	22.2	22.2	5.6	16.7	0.0	100.6
	(N=18)	(16.7)	(33.4)	(55.6)	(77.8)	(83.9)	(100.6)	(100.6)	(100.6)
	Comparison+	11.1	44.4	0.0	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	99.9
	(N=9)	(11.1)	(55.5)	(55.5)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)
1	Experimental+	15.4	23.1	23.1	15.4	7.7	7.7	7.7	100.1
	(N=13)	(15.4)	(38.5)	(61.6)	(77.6)	(84.7)	(92.4)	(100.1)	(100.1)
	Comparison	20.0	25.0	25.0	5.0	5.0	20.0	0.0	100.0
	(N=20)	(20.0)	(45.0)	(70.0)	(75.0)	(80.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
2	Experimental	5.0	35.0	20.0	5.0	15.0	15.0	5.0	100.0
	(N=20)	(5.0)	(40.0)	(60.0)	(65.0)	(80.0)	(95.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
	Comparison+	29.4	11.8	35.3	11.8	0.0	11.8	0.0	100.1
	(N=17)	(29.4)	(41.2)	(76.5)	(88.3)	(88.3)	(100.1)	(100.1)	(100.1)

3	Experimental (N=4)	0.0 (0.0)	50.0 (50.0)	25.0 (75.0)	0.0 (75.0)	0.0 (75.0)	0.0 (75.0)	25.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison (N=8)	25.0 (25.0)	37.5 (62.5)	12.5 (75.0)	0.0 (75.0)	12.5 (87.5)	0.0 (87.5)	12.5 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
4	Experimental (N=5)	40.0 (40.0)	0.0 (40.0)	20.0 (60.0)	0.0 (60.0)	0.0 (60.0)	0.0 (60.0)	40.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
	Comparison (N=2)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	50.0 (50.0)	50.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
5 or more	Experimental+ (N=11)	9.0 (9.0)	9.0 (18.0)	27.0 (45.0)	36.0 (81.0)	9.0 (90.0)	0.0 (90.0)	9.0 (99.0)	99.0 (99.0)
	Comparison (N=4)	50.0 (50.0)	0.0 (50.0)	0.0 (50.0)	0.0 (50.0)	0.0 (50.0)	25.0 (75.0)	25.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

Both Groups: $X^2 = 111.4$ df = 30 $p \leq .001$, C = .68
Experimental Groups: $X^2 = 92.3$ df = 30 $p \leq .001$, C = .75
Comparison Group: $X^2 = 107.6$ df = 30 $p \leq .001$, C = .80
*Figures in parentheses represent cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The distributions in Tables 21 and 22 were not significantly different and the data in them, on being scrutinized, appear to reflect the absence of the predicted relationship. All the chi squares produced from Table 23 were significant, but since a difference in the number of living children was shown to be significant on only one out of three measures of disengagement, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. By definition, this also makes the corollary untenable. However, when a C test was performed on the chi squares from the one measure which produced a statistically significant difference, it was shown that the relationship was stronger for the comparison group than the experimental group, which is in the direction opposite from the prediction. Therefore, though the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, the number of living children did prove to be a significant variable on one measure of disengagement (perceived lifespace), so there exists a partial tendency toward the confirmation of the hypothesis.

Surprisingly, however, though the data tend toward affirmation of the hypothesis in general, they also seem to refute the corollary. Hence, it appears, at least in part, that children interfere with the disengagement process of all aged people but more so with older people who are not in a new marriage situation. This particular study did not gather any explanatory data on this situation but it may be speculated that old people who have close and frequent interactional relationships with their children might tend to remarry less late in life, perhaps to keep the original family memory intact or even, perhaps, merely for estate purposes; whereas an old person without close family ties may tend more to marry again simply for companionship due to his loneliness.

The second working hypothesis stated that the greater the number of living siblings an aged person has in both the experimental and comparison groups, the less will be his disengagement. The corollary stipulated that if a significant difference is noted, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental group than in the comparison. Initially, it will be of interest to tabulate the number of living siblings for both groups. This is accomplished in Table 24.

Table 24

The Number of Living Siblings in the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Number of Living Siblings										Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 or more	
Exp.+	23.9	22.5	18.3	9.9	5.6	7.0	5.6	0.0	2.8	4.2	99.8
(N=71)	(23.9)	(46.4)	(64.7)	(74.5)	(80.2)	(87.2)	(92.8)	(92.8)	(95.6)	(99.8)	(99.8)
Comp.+	28.3	15.0	15.0	8.3	13.3	8.3	3.3	1.7	3.3	3.3	99.8
(N=60)	(28.3)	(43.3)	(58.3)	(66.6)	(79.9)	(88.2)	(91.5)	(93.2)	(96.5)	(99.8)	(99.8)

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The data indicate that there was very little variation in the number of living siblings between the two groups. The last three columns were collapsed into a single "7 or more" classification for the next three tables. These distributions, then, on the three measures of engagement by the number of living siblings, are presented in Tables 25, 26, and 27.

Table 25

Total Lifespace Measure f Score by Number of Living Siblings for the Experimental and Comparison Groups Combined (Percentages)*

Number of Living Siblings	Total Lifespace Measure f Score								Total
	0-99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500-999	1000-1999	2000 or more	
0	32.4	35.3	17.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.0	2.9	100.0
(N=34)	(32.4)	(67.7)	(85.5)	(88.4)	(91.3)	(94.2)	(97.1)	(100.0)	(100.0)
1	24.0	44.0	4.0	4.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	0.0	100.0
(N=25)	(24.0)	(68.0)	(72.0)	(76.0)	(84.0)	(92.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
2	27.3	22.7	27.3	4.5	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
(N=22)	(27.3)	(50.0)	(77.3)	(81.8)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
3	0.0	25.0	16.7	0.0	8.3	25.0	16.7	8.3	100.0
(N=12)	(0.0)	(25.0)	(41.7)	(41.7)	(50.0)	(75.0)	(91.7)	(100.0)	(100.0)
4+	33.3	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	8.3	99.9
(N=12)	(33.3)	(58.3)	(83.3)	(83.3)	(83.3)	(83.3)	(91.6)	(99.9)	(99.9)
5	20.0	20.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
(N=10)	(20.0)	(40.0)	(70.0)	(80.0)	(80.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
6	33.3	16.7	16.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
(N=6)	(33.3)	(50.6)	(66.7)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
7 or more	0.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	30.0	20.0	0.0	10.0	100.0
(N=10)	(0.0)	(30.0)	(40.0)	(40.0)	(70.0)	(90.0)	(90.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

$X^2 = 107.3$ df = 49 $p < .01$, C = .63

*Figures in parentheses represent cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The contingency coefficient of .63, which was calculated for Table 25, is indicative of a moderately strong relationship. Although the tabulation summarizes the data for both groups combined, chi squares were computed from the raw data on each group separately; for the experimental group it was significant at the .001 level, while for the comparison group alone it was not significant. From this it appears, in this first test at least, that the data tend to demonstrate a relationship, and that it is in the direction predicted.

The results of the second test on the importance of the number of living siblings to the total role count are presented in Table 26. Again, although Table 26 only summarizes the data for both groups, chi squares were computed on the raw data for each group alone; however, neither chi square was of sufficient magnitude to be significant at the .05 level of confidence.

The outcome of the perceived lifespace score by the number of living siblings is depicted in Table 27. As in Tables 25 and 26, the distributions in Table 27 represent the total for both the experimental and comparison groups taken together; however, the chi square statistic was again computed on the raw data from each group by itself and in both cases the chi square produced was not significant at the acceptable confidence level.

Since a difference in the number of living siblings was shown to be significant for both groups in only one out of three measures of engagement (and this relationship held its significance for only one

Table 26

The Total Role Count by the Number of Living Siblings for Both the Experimental and Comparison Groups Combined (Percentages)*

Number of Living Siblings	Total Role Count									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
0+	2.9	0.0	5.9	23.5	23.5	26.5	14.7	0.0	2.9	99.9
(N=34)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(8.8)	(32.3)	(55.8)	(82.3)	(97.0)	(97.0)	(99.9)	(99.9)
1	0.0	0.0	4.0	20.0	28.0	28.0	16.0	4.0	0.0	100.0
(N=25)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(4.0)	(24.0)	(52.0)	(80.0)	(96.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
2	0.0	0.0	9.1	9.1	13.6	40.9	22.7	4.5	0.0	100.0
(N=22)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(9.1)	(18.2)	(31.8)	(72.7)	(95.4)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
3+	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	25.0	33.3	33.3	0.0	99.9
(N=12)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(8.3)	(8.3)	(8.3)	(33.3)	(66.6)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)
4	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	16.7	25.0	25.0	8.3	0.0	100.0
(N=12)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(25.0)	(41.7)	(66.7)	(91.7)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
5	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	20.0	30.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	100.0
(N=10)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(10.0)	(20.0)	(40.0)	(70.0)	(90.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
(N=6)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(50.0)	(50.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
7 or more	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	40.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	100.0
(N=10)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(30.0)	(70.0)	(90.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

$X^2 = 45.9$ df = 48 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 27

The Total Perceived Lifespace Score by the Number of Living Siblings for Both the Experimental and Comparison Groups Combined (Percentages)*

Number of Living Siblings	Total Perceived Lifespace Score								Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16-19	
0	14.7	26.5	29.4	14.7	5.9	5.9	2.9	0.0	100.0
(N=34)	(14.7)	(41.2)	(70.6)	(85.3)	(91.2)	(97.1)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
1	20.0	28.0	12.0	12.0	8.0	12.0	0.0	8.0	100.0
(N=25)	(20.0)	(48.0)	(60.0)	(72.0)	(80.0)	(92.0)	(92.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
2+	22.7	27.3	27.3	13.6	4.5	4.5	0.0	0.0	99.9
(N=22)	(22.7)	(50.0)	(77.3)	(90.9)	(95.4)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)
3+	16.7	8.3	25.0	33.3	8.3	8.3	0.0	0.0	99.9
(N=12)	(16.7)	(25.0)	(50.0)	(83.3)	(91.6)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)
4+	8.3	33.3	16.7	16.7	8.3	8.3	0.0	8.3	99.9
(N=12)	(8.3)	(41.6)	(58.3)	(75.0)	(83.3)	(91.6)	(91.6)	(99.9)	(99.9)
5	20.0	10.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	30.0	10.0	0.0	100.0
(N=10)	(20.0)	(30.0)	(50.0)	(60.0)	(60.0)	(90.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
6	0.0	16.7	33.3	16.7	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
(N=6)	(0.0)	(16.7)	(50.0)	(66.7)	(66.7)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
7	30.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	10.0	20.0	10.0	100.0
or more (N=10)	(30.0)	(40.0)	(50.0)	(50.0)	(60.0)	(70.0)	(90.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

$X^2 = 68.2$ df $= 49$ $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses depict cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

the groups taken separately), the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. By definition this also makes the corollary untenable. However, the results of one test (lifespace measure f score) were in keeping with the hypothesis and the relationship was certainly stronger in the experimental group; thus, it can be said, as well, that the data tended to confirm the corollary. In human terms this means that old people with a greater number of brothers and sisters see and talk to more people generally than old people with fewer brothers and sisters. It also means that aged newlyweds with the same number of brothers and sisters as aged persons who are not newly wed tend to see and talk more to other people.

The third working hypothesis stated that urban aged subjects will be more engaged than rural aged subjects. The corollary stipulated that if a significant difference is noted, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental than in the comparison group.

The distributions for the lifespace measure f score by residence (Table 28) did not vary enough to achieve statistical significance. The data, on examination, do not seem to reveal any degree of relationship, hence the lack of statistical significance appears to be corroborated.

The results of the role count device by rural/urban residence are exhibited in Table 29. Even though the chi square statistic generated from the distributions was not significant, the rural respondents led the urban ones in the three lower role count columns and

Table 28

Total Lifespace Measure f Score by Rural and Urban Residence for Both the Experimental and Comparison Groups Combined (Percentages)*

Residence	Total Lifespace Measure f Score									Total
	0-99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500-999	1000-1999	2000-2999	3000 & over	
Urban	21.2	33.3	16.7	6.1	7.6	10.6	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
(N=66)	(21.2)	(54.5)	(71.2)	(77.3)	(84.9)	(95.5)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Rural+	26.2	27.7	18.5	3.1	9.2	4.6	4.6	1.5	4.6	100.5
(N=65)	(26.2)	(53.9)	(72.4)	(75.5)	(84.7)	(89.3)	(93.9)	(95.9)	(100.5)	(100.5)

$X^2 = 0.3$ df = 8 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses depict cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 29

The Total Role Count by Rural and Urban Residence for Both the Experimental and Comparison Groups Combined (Percentages)*

Residence	Total Role Count									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Urban+	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	18.2	27.3	25.8	10.6	1.5	100.1
(N=66)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(16.7)	(34.9)	(62.2)	(88.0)	(98.6)	(100.0)	(100.1)
Rural	1.5	0.0	10.8	12.3	24.6	30.8	16.9	3.1	0.0	100.0
(N=65)	(1.5)	(1.5)	(12.3)	(24.3)	(49.2)	(80.0)	(96.9)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

$X^2 = 2.0$ df = 8 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

the urban respondents led the rural ones in the three higher role count columns. This seems to give support to the hypothesis and in the predicted direction.

The chi square computed from the third test involving the perceived lifespace score by rural or urban residence of the subjects was not significant, and the data within the distributions also appear not to demonstrate the predicted pattern (Table 30).

Table 30

Total Perceived Lifespace Score by Rural and Urban Residence for the Experimental and Comparison Groups Combined (Percentages)*

Residence	Total Perceived Lifespace Score									Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17-19	
Urban (N=66)	19.7 (19.7)	21.2 (40.9)	19.7 (60.6)	15.2 (75.8)	6.1 (81.9)	9.1 (91.0)	3.0 (94.0)	4.5 (98.5)	1.5 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Rural (N=65)	15.4 (15.4)	24.6 (40.0)	24.6 (64.6)	13.8 (78.4)	6.2 (84.6)	12.3 (96.9)	3.1 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

$X^2 = 0.45$ df = 8 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses depict cumulative percentages.

Since an urban-rural difference was not statistically demonstrated to be significant for any of the three measures of engagement, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. By definition, this also makes the corollary untenable. However, on one measure (role count) there seemed to be a slight indication in the data toward confirmation of the hypothesis; which suggests that aged persons living in cities do tend to have more contacts with other people on a regular basis than elderly people living in the country.

The fourth working hypothesis stated that the subjects in both groups who have spouses under the age of 60 will be more engaged than the subjects whose spouses are 60 years of age or older. The corollary stipulated that if a significant difference is noted, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental than in the comparison group.

The outcome of the lifespace measure f score by the age of spouse for the subjects of both groups combined is displayed in Table 31. Though the distributions were not different enough to be statistically significant at the acceptable level of confidence, with more than half of the subjects

Table 31

Total Lifespace Measure f Score by Age of Spouse for Both the Experimental and Comparison Groups Combined (Percentages)*

	Total Lifespace Measure f Score								
	0-99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500-999	1000-1999	2000 & over	Total
60 or Over+ (N=62)	22.6 (22.6)	37.1 (59.7)	17.7 (77.4)	3.2 (80.6)	4.8 (85.4)	6.5 (91.9)	4.8 (96.7)	3.2 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)
Under 60 (N=34)	17.6 (17.6)	14.7 (32.3)	23.5 (55.8)	5.9 (61.7)	11.8 (73.5)	14.7 (88.2)	5.9 (91.4)	5.8 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

$X^2 = 6.6$ df = 7 $p > .05$

*Figures in parentheses represent cumulative percentages.

+Total percengages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

with spouses over 60 years old falling into the two lower columns on the table and the subjects with younger spouses leading on all the higher columns, the configuration of data seems to lend support to the hypothesis. Simplistically, this means that the younger the spouse an aged person has the more people he will know.

Table 32 presents the results of the role count test by age of

Table 32

Total Role Count by Age of Spouse for the Experimental and Comparison Groups Separately and Combined (Percentages)*

Age of Spouse	Group	Total Role Count 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
60 or Older	Exp.	0.0	0.0	5.7	14.3	14.3	48.6	17.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	(N=35)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(5.7)	(20.0)	(34.3)	(82.9)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
	Comp.+	0.0	0.0	11.1	7.4	25.9	18.5	29.6	7.4	0.0	99.9
	(N=27)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(11.1)	(18.5)	(44.4)	(62.9)	(92.5)	(99.9)	(99.9)	(99.9)
	Both+	0.0	0.0	8.1	11.3	19.4	35.5	22.6	3.2	0.0	100.1
	(N=62)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(8.1)	(19.4)	(38.8)	(74.3)	(96.9)	(100.1)	(100.1)	(100.1)
Under 60	Exp.	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	21.4	35.7	21.4	3.6	100.0
	(N=28)	(3.6)	(3.6)	(3.6)	(3.6)	(17.9)	(39.3)	(75.0)	(96.4)	(100.0)	(100.0)
	Comp.+	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	16.7	50.0	16.7	0.0	100.1
	(N=6)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(16.7)	(16.7)	(33.4)	(83.4)	(100.1)	(100.1)	(100.1)
	Both+	2.9	0.0	0.0	2.9	11.8	20.6	38.2	20.6	2.9	99.9
	(N=34)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(2.9)	(5.8)	(17.6)	(38.2)	(76.4)	(97.0)	(99.9)	(99.9)

Both Groups: $X^2 = 11.44$ df = 8 $p > .05$
Experimental Group: $X^2 = 21.0$ df = 8 $p < .01$
Comparison Group: $X^2 = 6.5$ df = 8 $p > .05$
*Figures in parentheses represent cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

spouse. The situation introduced here is unusual in that the distributions for both groups combined proved not to vary sufficiently to be statistically significant, which tends to refute the hypothesis, and the data in the table do not seem to contradict this finding. However, when taken separately, the chi square for the experimental group was statistically significant, while it was not for the comparison group. This can only be interpreted as supportive of the corollary, which means that aged newlyweds with young spouses tend to be more active in church and clubs and have more friends, acquaintances, neighbors, relatives, co-workers, and others in the house than do aged people in general who also have young spouses.

The distributions resulting from the perceived lifespace score measure by age of spouse appear in Table 33. Notwithstanding that the

Table 33

The Total Perceived Lifespace Score by Age of Spouse for Both the Experimental and Comparison Groups Combined (Percentages)*

Age of Spouse	Total Perceived Lifespace Score							Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15-19	
60 or Over (N = 62)	21.0 (21.0)	25.8 (46.8)	21.0 (67.8)	16.1 (83.9)	4.8 (88.7)	6.5 (95.2)	4.8 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Under 60 (N = 34)	5.9 (5.9)	23.5 (29.4)	29.4 (58.8)	11.8 (70.6)	8.8 (79.4)	11.8 (91.2)	8.8 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

$X^2 = 2.6$ df = 6 $p > .05$

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.

variance between the distributions did not reach statistical significance, a greater percentage of subjects with older spouses occupied the two lower columns of the table while a greater percentage of subjects with young spouses occupied the three higher columns. This means that aged people in general who have young spouses perceive themselves as relatively more active now when compared with their younger selves than do other aged individuals whose spouses are over 60 years of age.

Since a difference in the age of spouse was not shown to be statistically significant for both groups in any of the three measures of engagement, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. By definition, this also makes the corollary untenable. However, on two of the measures (lifespace f score and perceived lifespace score) the data, after inspection, appeared to confirm the hypothesis to a degree. Also in terms of the role count test, the data lent credence to the corollary.

The fifth and final working hypothesis stipulated that in both groups, whites will be more engaged than blacks. The corollary stated that if a significant racial difference is noted, the relationship will be stronger in the experimental than the comparison group.

The distributions of both groups on the lifespace measure f score by race did not differ enough to achieve statistical significance and the data within those distributions, when studied, do not appear to demonstrably vary (Table 34).

The results of the role count test by race for all subjects (Table 35) showed that the two groups did not vary enough to produce a

Table 34

The Lifespace Measure f Score by Race for All Subjects (Percentages)*

Race	Total Lifespace f Score									Total
	0-99	100-199	200-299	300-399	400-499	500-999	1000-1999	2000-2999	3000 & over	
White+	23.0	27.0	16.2	2.7	8.1	10.8	6.8	1.4	4.1	100.1
(N=74)	(23.0)	(50.0)	(66.2)	(68.9)	(77.0)	(87.8)	(94.6)	(96.0)	(100.0)	(100.1)
Black+	24.6	35.1	19.3	7.0	8.8	3.5	1.8	0.0	0.0	100.1
(N=57)	(24.6)	(59.7)	(79.0)	(86.0)	(94.8)	(98.3)	(100.1)	(100.1)	(100.1)	(100.1)

$X^2 = 4.2$ df = 8 $p > .05$

*Parenthetical figures represent cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

Table 35

The Total Role Counts by Race for All Subjects (Percentages)*

Race	Total Role Count									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
White+	1.4	0.0	6.8	10.8	23.0	28.4	18.9	10.8	0.0	100.1
(N=74)	(1.4)	(1.4)	(8.2)	(19.0)	(42.0)	(70.4)	(89.3)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.1)
Black	0.0	0.0	3.5	19.3	19.3	29.8	24.6	1.8	1.8	100.0
(N=57)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(3.5)	(22.8)	(42.1)	(71.9)	(96.4)	(98.2)	(100.0)	(100.0)

$X^2 = 0.65$ df = 8 $p > .05$

*Parenthetical figures depict cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

significant chi square statistic and the data, on being examined, also failed to show a demonstrable difference.

The results of the final test (perceived lifespace) are depicted in Table 36. These distributions also proved not to be statistically significant at the acceptable level of confidence and the data within the table do not appear to indicate a clear pattern.

Table 36

The Perceived Lifespace Score for All Subjects
(Percentages)*

Race	Total Perceived Lifespace Score									Total
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17-19	
White+	14.9	18.9	29.7	13.5	8.1	12.2	1.4	0.0	0.0	100.1
(N=74)	(14.9)	(33.8)	(63.5)	(77.0)	(85.1)	(97.3)	(98.7)	(100.1)	(100.1)	(100.1)
Black+	21.1	28.1	12.3	15.8	3.5	8.8	5.3	3.5	1.8	100.2
(N=57)	(21.1)	(49.2)	(61.5)	(77.3)	(80.8)	(89.6)	(94.9)	(98.4)	(100.2)	(100.2)

$X^2 = 3.2$ df = 8 $p > .05$
*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentage.
+Total percentages do not equal exacty 100.0 due to rounding.

Since a racial difference was not demonstrated as a statistically significant variable on the basis of any of the three measures of engagement, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. By definition, this also makes the corollary untenable. In addition, none of the three distributions provided evidence to repudiate this position.

Because this study constructed formalized hypotheses for testing, it had to be concerned with the statistical significance of the relationships; based on this, none of the 13 formulations proved tenable. However, a few of the chi squares calculated were significant and several configurations of the data appeared to indicate the existence of a relationship.

To summarize, the results of the hypotheses testing are:

1. The hypothesis asserting that being newlywed should retard the process of disengagement was supported by the data configurations on all three measures of engagement, but none of these tests achieved statistical significance.

2. The hypothesis asserting that being married should retard the process of disengagement also appeared to be affirmed by the configurations of data on all three measures of engagement, but none of the chi squares generated from any of the distributions were of sufficient magnitude to be significant at an acceptable level of confidence.

3. The hypothesis asserting that being married to a spouse too young to be a subject should retard the disengagement process of the older mate received some support from the configurations of data on two of the measures of engagement (lifespace measure f score and perceived lifespace measure), but neither test resulted in a statistically significant relationship.

4. The hypothesis asserting that a large number of living children should tend to retard an aged person's disengagement received partial support because when tested by the perceived lifespace score, a statistically significant relationship was the result.

5. The hypothesis asserting that a large number of living siblings should tend to retard an aged person's disengagement received partial support, because when tested by the lifespace measure f score the resultant chi square statistic was significant.

6. The hypothesis asserting that the urban elderly should be less disengaged than the rural elderly received a degree of support because the configuration of data on the role count test exhibited a tendency toward confirmation, although the variance between the distributions was not great enough to produce a statistically significant relationship.

7. The hypothesis asserting that women should be less disengaged than men was categorically disproven since none of the three tests generated a significant statistic and none of the data configurations seemed to demonstrate any observable patterning.

8. The hypothesis asserting that whites should be less disengaged than blacks was also categorically disproven since none of the three tests generated a significant statistic and none of the data configuration seemed to demonstrate any observable patterning.

With regards to the five corollaries, all have to be considered disproven since none of their hypotheses were categorically proven; however, a summary of the consequences of the testing on the corollaries follows:

1. The corollary which stipulated that the experimental group subjects with young spouses should be less disengaged than comparison group subjects with young spouses received some credence from the role count measure because that test achieved a statistically significant difference in the experimental group while the variance in the comparison group failed to attain statistical significance.

2. The corollary which stipulated that the experimental group subjects with the same number of siblings as comparison group subjects should be less disengaged acquired partial credence from the lifespace measure f score since that test achieved a statistically significant difference in the experimental group while the difference in the distributions for the comparison group did not attain statistical significance.

3. The corollary which stipulated urban experimental group subjects would be less disengaged than urban comparison group subjects did not attain statistical significance on any of the three measures of engagement and none of the configurations of data appeared to demonstrate any observable patterning.

4. The corollary which stipulated that white experimental group subjects would be less disengaged than white comparison group subjects also did not attain statistical significance on any of the three measures of engagement and none of the configurations of data appeared to demonstrate any observable patterning.

5. The corollary which stipulated that the experimental group subjects with the same number of children as comparison group subjects should be less disengaged was actually borne out in the direction opposite from that predicted. The chi square tests performed on the distributions for the perceived lifespace score were significant for both groups but the contingency coefficients showed that the relationship was stronger for the comparison group.

Of the three measures of engagement used, each produced three of the nine apparently related configurations of data. But of the six tests which were statistically significant, the perceived lifespace measure produced three, the role count measure two, and the lifespace measure f score only one.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

The preceding chapter suggested that although none of the hypotheses was borne out statistically to an acceptable level of confidence, there still might be some degree of association between the variables tested. However, there may have been some built-in bias that could account for the differences in disengagement that were noticed between the samples. Three examples of possible bias are presented. They are the age differential between the two groups, differences in the number of other persons in the household, and differences in life satisfaction. The first is shown to be statistically significant. The two others did not attain statistical significance but are shown to be potential sources of bias. This means that the two samples were not compatible on three important variables, and if a bias was introduced because of them, it would act toward confirmation of the hypotheses in the direction predicted. Hence, the apparent relationships observed in the data throughout the last chapter might be the result of these differences between the groups rather than their variations in disengagement.

Age Differential Between the Groups

It is possible that a sample of aged newlyweds might contain more than its proportionate share of younger old people, that is, persons in their 60's and 70's, while a sample of aged people selected without regard to present marital status or length of time in that status would have its proportionate share of people over 80 years of age. This, indeed, proved to be the case (Table 37). With more than a third of the experimental group still in their early 60's and none of that group having reached their 80th birthday while only a fourth of the comparison group were in their early 60's and a fifth of that group being over 80 years old; and since the distributions did differ sufficiently to be statistically significant, it must be assumed that the comparison group had a built-in bias toward disengagement.

Table 37

Ages of the Respondents for the Experimental
and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Age of Respondents					Total
	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80 & over	
Experimental (N = 71)	33.8 (33.3)	45.1 (78.9)	14.1 (93.0)	7.0 (100.0)	0.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Comparison (N = 60)+	25.0 (25.0)	28.3 (53.3)	18.3 (71.6)	8.3 (79.9)	20.0 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)

$\chi^2 = 19.5$ df = 4 $p < .001$

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

Number of Others in Household

The number of other persons in the subject's household is a key question used in two of the three measures of engagement (see Appendix A). It is plausible that newly marrieds, because they are at least a twosome, might average out much higher on the number of others in the household than other noninstitutionalized aged people generally. This proved to be the case (Table 38).

Table 38

Number of Others in the Household for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Number of Others in House					Total+
	0	1	2	3	4 or more	
Experimental (N = 71)	8.5 (8.5)	67.6 (76.1)	14.1 (90.2)	8.5 (98.7)	1.4 (100.1)	100.1 (100.1)
Comparison (N = 60)	23.3 (23.3)	50.0 (73.3)	16.7 (90.0)	1.7 (91.7)	8.4 (100.1)	100.1 (100.1)

$X^2 = 3.0$ df = 4 $p > .05$

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.

+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The findings for the comparison group compare favorably with the national averages which show that 23 percent of the people over 65 live alone, 49.5 percent live with one other in the house, and 27.5 percent live with two or more other people in the house (Aging, 1963:1 and 1969:20). These figures also closely parallel those of Great Britian where 22.2 percent of the population over 65 live alone and 77.8 percent live with one or more other persons in the house (Tunstall, 1966:48).

In contrast, the experimental group data showed 76.1 percent living alone or with one other (73.3 for the comparison group) and 23.9 percent having two or more other persons living in the house with them (26.7 percent for the comparison group).

The fact that more than half again as many of the experimental group than the comparison group were living as couples was offset by the fact that five times as many of the comparison group subjects shared their households with four or more people. Hence, on balance, it appears that the assumption that aged newlyweds might generally have a greater number of other people in the house than aged citizens living in various other household arrangements does not seem to hold up.

However, the big difference was the zero column, which figured proportionately larger in the role count tally. The percentage of the comparison group living alone was nearly three times greater than the percentage of the experimental group living alone, simply because a spouse was counted as another person in the household. Hence, although the difference between the two groups as to the number of others in the house was not statistically significant, it is clear that there was a real variation noticeable, which must lead us to conclude that a disproportionate number of the comparison group would rank low in the lifespace measure f score and role count measures of engagement.

Results of a Life Satisfaction Index

It is at least conceivable that aged people who undertake a new marriage might have more vigor and vitality, and therefore be happier generally, than other old persons. To be sure, a new marriage late in life may act to amke a person happy, or, it could be, as well, that vigorous, zestful senior citizens tend to contract new marriages and then become even more happy as a result of it. At any rate, the life satisfaction entity must be measured against both groups if for no other reason than to ascertain if it can be excluded as possible cause of bias. To determine if there was a variance in satisfaction with life, both groups were given the Life Satisfaction Index A (LSIA), as developed by Neugarten _et al._ (see Appendix A).

The LSIA is divided into five subsections. The first subsection, containing six items, attempts to measure mood tone. The second subsection, also containing six items, attempts to measure zest for living. The third subsection, consisting of three items, attempts to measure congruence between desired and achieved goals. The fourth subsection, also consisting of three items, attempts to measure personal fortitude. The last subsection, of only two items, attempts to measure the subject's self-concept. The total of all these subscales is supposed to reflect a respondent's degree of life satisfaction. Each question on the schedule was scored one point. (See scoring key in the Appendix.) This made the possible range for the mood tone subtotal from zero to six points, the zest for life subtotal from zero to six, the congruence subtotal from zero to three, the fortitude subtotal from zero to three, and the self-concept subtotal from zero to two points. This makes the maximum possible range for the total LSIA from zero to twenty points.

None of the chi squares computed on any of the distributions of the five subsections or the total LSIA score was significant at the lowest acceptable level of confidence. However, there were visible variations in the data in some of the distributions. The mood tone results showed that 25 percent of the comparison group fell into the two lower scored columns in contrast to only 14.1 percent of the experimental group while 39.5 percent of the experimental group scored in the two higher columns and only 26.6 percent of the comparison group reached those columns (Table 39).

Table 39

Mood Tone Subtotal of the LSIA for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Mood Tone Subtotal 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total+
Experimental	2.8	11.3	15.5	11.3	19.7	25.4	14.1	100.1
(N = 71)	(2.8)	(14.1)	(29.6)	(40.9)	(60.6)	(86.0)	(100.1)	(100.1)
Comparison	6.7	18.3	13.3	18.3	16.7	18.3	8.3	99.9
(N = 60)	(6.7)	(25.0)	(38.3)	(56.6)	(73.3)	(91.6)	(99.9)	(99.9)

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The zest for life subtotal also demonstrated an observable difference since more than twice as many comparison as experimental subjects fell in the two lower scored columns while 14.1 percent of the experimental subjects made the highest score column in contrast to only 8.3 percent of the comparison subjects being positioned there (Table 40).

Table 40

Zest for Life Subtotal of the LSIA for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Zest for Life Subtotal							Total+
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Experimental (N = 71)	2.8 (2.8)	4.2 (7.0)	19.7 (26.7)	23.9 (50.6)	21.1 (71.7)	14.1 (85.8)	14.1 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)
Comparison (N = 60)	6.7 (6.7)	8.3 (15.6)	20.0 (35.0)	23.3 (58.3)	18.3 (76.6)	15.0 (91.6)	8.3 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The variances in the distributions on the congruence were not large but the comparison group did have more than twice as many respondents in the lowest scored column than the experimental group and had fewer respondents placed in the highest scored column than the experimental group (Table 41).

Table 41

Congruence Subtotal of the LSIA for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Congruence Subtotal				Total
	0	1	2	3	
Experimental+ (N=71)	4.2 (4.2)	21.1 (25.3)	36.6 (61.9)	38.0 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)
Comparison (N=60)	10.0 (10.0)	10.0 (20.0)	48.3 (68.3)	31.7 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The fortitude subtotal displayed a reversal in the trend in that half again as many experimental as comparison subjects fell in the lowest scored column while more than double the amount of comparison subjects than experimental subjects fell in the highest scored column (Table 42).

Table 42

Fortitude Subtotal of the LSIA for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Fortitude Subtotal				Total
	0	1	2	3	
Experimental+ (N = 71)	38.0 (38.0)	36.6 (74.6)	21.1 (95.7)	4.2 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)
Comparison (N = 60)	21.7 (21.7)	45.0 (66.7)	23.3 (90.0)	10.0 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

The self-concept resulted in more comparison than experimental being placed in the highest scored column and also in the lowest as well, hence the weight of one balances the weight of the other (Table 43).

Table 43

Self-Concept Subtotal of the LSIA for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Self-Concept Subtotal			Total
	0	1	2	
Experimental (N = 71)	21.1 (21.1)	62.0 (83.1)	16.9 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)
Comparison+ (N = 60)	31.7 (31.7)	46.7 (78.4)	21.7 (100.1)	100.1 (100.1)

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

Surprisingly, when all of the subsections were summed into the total LSIA, there was no visibly marked difference between the distributions (Table 44).

Table 44

Total LSIA Score for the Experimental and Comparison Groups (Percentages)*

Group	Total LSIA Score						Total
	1-4	5-7	8-10	11-13	14-16	17-20	
Experimental+ (N = 71)	2.8 (2.8)	15.5 (18.3)	23.9 (42.2)	31.0 (73.2)	19.7 (92.9)	7.0 (99.9)	99.9 (99.9)
Comparison (N = 60)	8.4 (8.4)	15.0 (23.4)	23.3 (46.7)	33.3 (80.0)	13.3 (93.3)	6.7 (100.0)	100.0 (100.0)

*Parenthetical figures denote cumulative percentages.
+Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

Since the distributions on the total LSIA produced no statistical or visually significant relationship, it can be dismissed as a variable that could produce a variance between aged newlyweds and other aged people in general. However, it should not be discounted that aged newlyweds seem to have a slightly higher mood tone, zest for life, and more congruence between desired and achieved goals than other aged persons in general but seem to have a lesser degree of fortitude. And, it is within the realm of possibility that this lack of fortitude caused them to actively seek out a life partner.

For purposes of analysis and to determine if a difference in life satisfaction could possibly have affected the subhypotheses and working hypotheses, the seven independent variables of those propositions (i.e., marital status, number of children, number of siblings, age of spouse, residence, sex, and race) were, each in turn, held constant and ran against each of the LSIA subtotals and total. Eleven significant relationships resulted. A numbered topical overview of these results follows:

(1) The number of living children variable produced a significant relationship in the experimental group on the mood tone subtotal.

(2) The number of living siblings variable produced a significant relationship in the comparison group on the total LSIA score.

(3 and 4) The age of spouse variable produced a significant difference on the mood tone subtotal for both the experimental and comparison groups.

(5) The sex variable produced a significant difference in the comparison group on the self-concept subtotal.

(6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11) The race variable produced significant differences in the experimental group on the mood tone subtotal, zest for life subtotal, fortitude subtotal, and the total LSIA score, in both groups combined on the mood tone subtotal and the fortitude subtotal.

It seems from the above that the most discriminating measure of life satisfaction was mood tone and the demographic variable most significant in affecting life satisfaction was race.

As regards race, it appears that Negroes manifest, to a noticeable degree, a somewhat lesser amount of life satisfaction. The experimental group contained 39 black subjects or 54.9 percent, whereas the comparison group had 35 black respondents or 58.3 percent.

Since whites manifested a slightly higher degree of life satisfaction and whites made up a slightly higher percentage of the experimental group, then this also tends to reduce the credibility of the small variation in disengagement noted between the two groups.

It is interesting to note that the independent variable in the working hypothesis about rural-urban residence and the initial subhypothesis (being married) produced no significant differences on any of the life satisfaction scales. From this it follows that marital status or residence does not seem to make any difference in an aged individual's degree of satisfaction with life.

Manifold problems arose in the field with the administering of the LSIA which seriously questioned the instrument's validity, and, therefore, should act to diminish the importance of any of the above relationships found with the total LSIA and all of its subsections. An analysis of the scale, along with some of the problems encountered with it in this study and others, as well as a suggested revision are placed in a special methodological note located in Appendix B.

Tabulations of Responses to Marriage Items

Even though annual figures show that the national increase in aged marriages has ceased, the leveling off occurred at a relatively high plateau. An estimated 50,000 people over 65 years of age marry each year (Aging, 1969:20). There is not an even split among males and females in this group, however; there are about twice as many grooms over 65 each year as there are brides. This means, of course, that not all the people over 65 who marry unite with mates who are also over 65. In fact, 18.6 percent of the over-65-brides marry men who have not yet reached 65 years of age and 61.6 percent of the over-65-grooms take women as their spouses who are under 65 years of age (Vital Statistics of the United States, Vol. III, Marriage and Divorce, 1967).

Because the phenomenon of aged marriages could have certain impact upon the theory in the marriage and family field, the last seven items on the interview schedule (see Appendix A) were open-ended marriage probes. These queries were directed only to those willing to respond to them. The items were constructed mainly to be put to the experimental group, but one couple (both of whom were over 60) in the comparison group were also newlyweds. These two subjects agreed to reply to the questions and their responses are tabulated with the others. Thirty-two experimental subjects also agreed to cooperate in the last part of the interview.

The first marriage question asked: "Did any of your children object to your marriage?" Not a single one of the respondents answered this in the affirmative, 27 subjects (79.4%) answered it negatively, and seven subjects (20.6%) had no children and therefore the question was not applicable to them.

The second marriage question asked: "Did anyone object to your marriage?" Of the 34 cooperating respondents, 33 (or 97%) answered in the negative and only one subject (3%) answered affirmatively.

The third marriage probe inquired as to how long the couple had known each other before the marriage took place. The distribution of responses on this item indicates that many of the subjects did not know each other for very long before they were married (Table 45). In fact, most of the subjects knew each other only two years or less before they were wed.

Table 45

The Length of Time the Cooperating Newlyweds Knew Each Other Before They Married (Number and Percentage)*

Length of Time	Number of Subjects	Percent	Cumulative Percentage
Less than a year	10	28.8	(28.8)
More than one year but less than two years	6	17.6	(46.4)
Two years at least	2	6.0	(52.4)
Three years at least	3	9.0	(61.4)
Four to six years	7	20.6	(82.0)
Seven to fifteen years	1	3.0	(85.0)
Sixteen to twenty-nine years	2	6.0	(91.0)
Thirty years or more	3	9.0	(99.9)
Total	34	99.9	(99.9)

*Total percentages do not equal exactly 100.0 due to rounding.

McKain, in his sample, found that 25 percent of his couples knew each other 40 years or more, and that it was not uncommon to find subjects married to the spouses of deceased siblings. Moreover, he added, that some of his subjects had even advertised for their mates through "lonely hearts" clubs (1969:23).

None of the subjects in this study attracted their mates through any sort of correspondence club and none were married to the former mates of deceased siblings. In addition, the data in Table 45 show that 91 percent of the subjects knew their spouses for less than thirty years. The reason for the latter discrepancy may be due to the fact that Florida attracts a great deal of its residents after they've already attained the age of 60 elsewhere. This means that not many of the other elderly people a senior citizen meets in Florida will be life-long acquaintances.

The fourth marriage query asked the couple if they were of the same religious faith. All Protestant sects were considered the same religion for this query. There were some responses in terms of different denominations which will receive attention shortly when this section is discussed. Also, if the couple were areligious, they were both considered the same religion. With this in mind then 28 respondents (82.4%) were of the same religious faith and six subjects (17.6%) were of different faiths. This means that the vast majority of subjects elected to enter unions that would be homogeneous as regards religion.

The fifth probe ascertained whether or not the wife was gainfully employed outside the home. The number of cooperating subjects that either were working wives or had working wives was 15 or 43.2 percent, 19 subjects or 46.8 percent were either nonworking wives or husbands with nonworking wives.

The sixth marriage question asked the newlyweds if they would have some advice or counsel to give other aged people who might be contemplating a new marriage late in life. Twenty subjects (57.6%) stated that they would give no advice and 14 subjects (42.4%) said they would give some advice.

The final marriage item asked the couple to give their major reason for contracting this marriage. Twenty-five subjects or 72.0 percent gave loneliness and/or companionship as their major reason for marrying while nine subjects (28.0%) gave some other reason. This corresponds very well with McKain's findings. He determined that from two-thirds to three-quarters of his subjects cited loneliness or compansionship as the major reason for their marriage.

Nature of Responses to the Marriage Queries

The first question about whether any of their children objected to the marriage was, without exception, answered in the negative. In addition, the replies were always very enthusiastic and couples with such statements as: "They are all well pleased," or "They couldn't be happier." Case number 15, an aged female newlywed, made an unsolicited but particularly incisive remark: "I think the younger children of middle-aged parents resent their parents remarrying, but I do not feel that anyone objects to grandparents remarrying. My own experience with other old people remarrying is that everyone, especially their own children, was clearly happy for them."

There was only one exception to this virtually universal acclaim of good will, and it was slight. In answer to the second question about whether anyone objected, there was but a single reply against the marriage. This was Case No. 62, and his exact remark was: "Some of my acquaintances predicted it wouldn't last because my wife is 30 years younger than I."

The third question asked the couple if they were of the same religious faith. There were several cases when the answer would be in the negative but they both proved to be Protestant. So whenever there came a negative reply to the question, the interviewer always probed: "Why not?" In the five cases where the distinction was within different Protestant denominations, the wife did the talking in the four following cases: Case No. 132, "He's Presbyterian and I'm Episcopalian." Case No. 30, "He's a Methodist and I'm a Baptist." Case No. 36, "No, and that causes trouble in the house." (The interviewer probed:) "Why is that?" (The reply was:) "Because he's a Baptist and I'm Church of Christ." Case No. 106, "He's a Mason, against organized churches, and I belong to the Christian Church." The only time it was the husband responding to a religiosity difference was Case No. 3, "I'm a Christian, but I'm not sure about her."

When asked if they had any advice for other aged people who might be contemplating a marriage late in life, the majority of the cooperating subjects stated they would mind their own business and not give out any advice in this matter. Some interesting comments were made by Case No. 4 (a male), "It would be the individual's own business, senior citizens are hard to talk into or out of things." And, Case No. 121 (another male), "I would tell him to get married, even though an unmarried elderly man can have a good time single." Cases No. 94 and 95 (a couple--first she, then he), also had something to say, "If you have been married before, don't measure your second husband by your first, but do make sure he is a Christian." And her husband's response: "I would quote the Scripture to them--'Be ye not unequally yoked'--and you cannot be equally yoked if one has faith in God and one does not. They must be compatible in other areas too, even though it means that both must work at it."

Not all the couples were giving advice about going ahead with it. Cases No. 35 and 36, when the question was put to them, shouted in unison: "Stay single!"

The last item, which asked the couple why they had married, drew the most comments, although the vast majority gave reasons of loneliness or companionship. Some examples follow: Case No. 26, "Both of us were alone and needed compansionship. We both had been married before and enjoyed the marital state." Cases No. 128 and 129, "Been married all our days; when our mates died, we felt lost." Cases No. 125 and 126, (the wife), "Love; I was a widow for thirty years, and he was the only one I'd have anything to do with." (the husband), "I was in love and lonely, too." Case No. 105 (a male), "Compansionship and a little sex, of course it don't take as much sex when you're past 60." Case No. 12 (another male), "I just got tired of being alone so I started looking for a good woman who I liked and would be nice to me. She wanted company too since she had been a widow for ten years. We've been married four years now and everything is just wonderful." Case No. 2 (a male), "I wanted to be legally married rather than just live with her because of church teachings as written in the Scripture, the Seventh Chapter of Romans." (The researcher probed:) "Aside from that, any other reason?" (The subject's response:) "I'm not a worldly man and don't like to go from one woman to another. I also needed someone to cook and clean." Case No. 4 (another male), "Loneliness, also having a spouse you can entertain and go out together to a lot of places." Case No. 79 (male), "Two can live together cheaper than two can live apart." Case No. 62 (male), "I didn't do it for the same reason as most, that is, I did not need a companion. I was doing fine by myself, but I met this nice girl from a respectable family, a girl I knew and everyone else knows can be trusted, so I decided to remarry, but I'm boss in the home, I want you to know, no woman, no matter how good a one, can give me orders."

Significance of This Study on Disengagement Theory

One of the major reasons for research is to test theory with an aim toward the clarification, verification, redefinition, or the redirecting of it.

The results of this study suggest three possibilities. One, there really is no significant difference in disengagement between newlywed ageds and ageds in general; two, the instrument used does not adequately measure disengagement; or, three, disengagement does not exist as a definitive entity.

The concept of disengagement seems theoretically sound, so it is most difficult to disclaim the phenomenon's existence. It was obvious to the researcher, that some of the subjects had a feeling of disengagement even though they were unaware of the scientific description. A few remarks by some comparison group subjects inserted at this point will be appropriate to illustrate this:

> Case No. 90. "A person should be granted two lives, one to practice with and one to live."
>
> Case No. 17. "A man lives once as a man and twice as a child, I'm now in my second childhood."

And, an 83-year-old widow actually said this:

> Case No. 40. "I'm just waiting for death."

Perhaps the most incisive comment, by a white male comparison group subject, typifies both the nonnormative individualized life style and also what may very well be the salient reason for the unpopularity of nursing homes among elderly citizens.

> Case No. 137. "The reason I wouldn't live in an old folk's home is not so much that they are depressing places, which they are, but because of the Army-like regimentation--about all getting up, eating, and doing other stuff at the same time everyday; I like to get up when I feel like it and eat when I feel like it."

The argument of subject No. 137 also seems to refute the assumption that a high rate of interaction is an optimum ideal for everyone. On the other hand, the flat statement of subject No. 40 seems to debate the polemical parallel that it is as natural to fight disengagement as it is to fight death. If the question were put bluntly to this researcher:

"Do you think that there is such a thing as disengagement?" the answer would be in the affirmative, although it may not as yet have been precisely described.

If we turn our attention to the measuring device, then, it seems likely that it does indeed gauge engagement as defined by its authors. It, quite obviously, has a high degree of face validity, plus the fact that it was field validated in the Kansas City Study.

Our task, then, it seems, is to sharpen or modify the definition of disengagement to accommodate the fact that a valid measuring instrument failed to detect any significant differences in engagement between aged newlyweds and other noninstitutionalized ageds.

If we consider disengagement as part of the socialization process, albeit the final part of it, the results of this research become more compatible with that definition.

Youmans (1969:68) talked of disengagement as part of the "life course." He saw disengagement as merely another stage in the life cycle. Disengagement, then, would remain, in this context, a societal expectation since a phasing-out of the elderly is functional for the group. It would be comparable, in a mirror image sort of way, to the phasing-in process that accompanies the earliest stage of socialization. If we view the total life cycle as a bell curve, there would be a gradual increase in role accrual toward a peak of involvement in the middle years and a gradual decrease in responsible activities in the final years of the lifespan.

This conception of disengagement also helps to explain why it was such a rarity for the friends and relatives of the newlyweds to object to the marriage; provided, of course, that these significant others saw the union as a twin withdrawal, that is, each of the mates being the other's companion as they disengage together. The elderly couple would then be viewed as an elderly pair rather than a new bride and groom. For this framework to logically hold up, no difference in disengagement between newlywed aged people and other aged people would be expected, and this was in fact the outcome.

This explanation would also account for the preponderance of subjects listing "companionship" as their major reason for marrying rather than reasons centering around reverting to an earlier stage in the life cycle.

Thusly, two societal expectations would be satisfied. A high value is placed on marriage; it is certainly looked on by the majority as a better alternative than undergoing life's experiences alone. The elderly are also expected to yield some of their responsibilities, and a union of two elderly people would not necessarily conflict with this as long as the purpose of the coupling was to have a partner to accompany oneself down the path of less involvement.

This apparent confirmation of disengagement as an entity does not mean the theoretical descriptions of disengagement written thus far need no more redefinition.

The data in this study seemed to support to some degree most of the variables in the hypotheses as factors in disengagement. However, two very common demographic variables received no confirmation to any degree in any of the tests as being related to disengagement. The findings on race and sex, precisely because the hypotheses containing these variables were not even slightly sustained by the data, may be the most damaging to the presently described frame of reference on disengagement. The results of this study, as regards race and sex, seem to conflict with some of the basic tenets of Cumming and Henry (1961:212-217) as postulated in their book-length statement of disengagement. In their third postulate the authors stipulate that because the roles of men and women are different, the process of disengagement will differ on the basis of sex. The findings of this study also disagree with the sixth postulate of Cumming and Henry about the abandonment of life's central roles--work for men, marriage and family for women--will result in a reduced lifespace unless new appropriate roles are available. The four corollaries of the sixth postulate also seem to be contradicted. Cumming and Henry maintained that a retired man's peer group shrinks while a wodow's peer group may swell, thus they faced different disengagement problems; and that some of the widow's disengagement problems are solvable by remarriage. Postulates 7-A and 7-B stated that if an individual becomes aware of the shortness of time remaining to him, then readiness for disengagement begins; and that society due to a differential death rate gives echelons of people its permission to disengage. It is a fact that the life expectancy is greater for whites than blacks and greater for females than males. But no difference was noted on the race and sex variables in this work. It is true that in the seventh postulate, the authors stipulated that the individual must be aware of this differential in expected life span, and although many women are aware that they live longer than men generally, not all blacks are aware that they do not live as long as whites generally. But the point is that there is a real and factual sex and race differential in life expectancy while there was absolutely no sex or race differential in disengagement measured in this project. This does indicate, it seems, that there needs to be some qualifying rewriting done by disengagement theorists.

The results of this study seem to confirm disengagement theory in parts and to be nonsupportive of it in other parts. Reciprocally, it does the same for activity theory.

This seems to indicate the need for some accommodation on the part of gerontologists to accept both processes as equally healthy alternatives in the adjustment to old age. Successful aging should be defined from the perspective of the most good for both the individual and society. This means that successful aging should equate with high life satisfaction on the part of the individual and low disruption from the point of view of society. If an elderly person wants to disengage, he should be gracefully allowed to do so and not be pressured into unwanted activity. If an elderly person wishes to have a high level of activity, then society should provide it. Care should be exercised though as to not disengage the younger members of society trying to reengage the elderly, most especially as regards employment.

Neither the disengagement nor the activity theory should be considered as the sole modal adjustment to agedness by those working in the field of aging. Rather, the two processes should be seen as bimodal. Moreover, either process should be considered as equally successful aging, the avenue selected being the one most compatible to the individual and based mainly on his own personal wishes with some regard for the protection of the larger society. With this in mind, the decision, for the most part, will be the individual's and given it, it can be predicted that some happily will take activity and some others will cheerfully accept disengagement.

Of course, this makes it appear that the socialization process has failed to present a clear cut definition of societal expectations for the final stage of the life cycle. But this apparent ambiguity can be resolved by viewing the socialization process as purposely dovetailing in the final stage and allowing two equally acceptable options of behavior. In a society that claims not to be rigid or inflexible, more behavioral alternatives must be tolerated. It may very well be among the aged portion of the population where some of these behavioral options are first attempted.

It is not enough to simply broaden the definition of successful aging to incorporate both the activity and disengagement theories and then merely to say that the one chosen will be left up to the individual's own free will when there may be intervening variables that interfere with the exercise of free will. We need to determine how much involvement or disinvolvement may be the result of physical, psychological, or social reasons, rather than one's own freedom of choice.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE STUDIES OF AGEDNESS AND AGED MARRIAGES

The purpose of this study was to determine if new marriages among the elderly would have a detering effect on their disengagement from society. Several other variables were also studied to determine if they were related to disengagement. Though none of the hypotheses formulated from these variables received support at the stipulated level of statistical significance, there still exists the possibility that the stated relationships exist. It could also be, as well, that no relationships exist.

When hypotheses are not borne out it does not mean that they should be discarded. The negative results could be due to faulty construction of the hypotheses, poor methodological techniques, inadequate measuring instruments, or that the theory they are testing is ill defined.

Ideal conditions for research rarely exist and there is no perfect researcher. However, care was taken in the hypotheses formulation and no insurmountable obstacles intervened during the field work. Moreover, the measures of engagement used are reasonably valid devices. One of the scales, the LSIA, presented problems (see Appendix B) but it was not directly involved in hypotheses testing.

Therefore, it must be concluded that the need for the refinement of disengagement theory continues and this can only be accomplished through future research. Some suggestions for further work in this area are presented in the next section.

Suggestions for Further Research

One of the main purposes of research is to point out areas where more research is needed.

It is unknown at this time just how much physical health, psychological health, or social conditions are related to activity levels or degree of disengagement. Perhaps nothing short of a massive interdisciplinary study will adequately deal with this question. It would be interesting, as well, to conduct a gerontological study using the amended Life Safistaction Index suggested by this work (see Appendix B). A future investigation might determine also why sex and race seem not to be related to disengagement; and why being married, being newlywed, being married to a young spouse, being urban, and having a large number of siblings and children appear to keep one slightly more engaged in some areas than other old people who lack these things.

It was shown that the number of living children was less significant in reducing disengagement among newlywed ageds than ageds in general. Does this mean that old people still considered actively as part of the family by their children are less likely to marry again late in life?

In replicating this entire study elsewhere to see if the same findings result, it would be well to include a proportionate number of institutionalized aged persons in the sample. Clark and Gallatin (1967: 380-385) in a study of aged persons, found that hospitalized subjects were decidedly more disengaged than subjects at large. The comparison group in this study may have proven more often to be significantly more disengaged if nursing home patients had been included in it. Self-centered oldsters are not only less likely to marry but may have proven even too much for their children and be more likely found in nursing homes and most likely would not have been picked up in either sample in the present study. This consideration becomes especially important now that fully 5 percent of the people over 65 live in institutions (Aging, 1970:18).

As was stated, more work needs to be done on how psychological factors and social conditions are related to an individual's activity level or degree of disengagement. What type of person is more apt to be happy if he remains involved? What type of person would be most prone to disengage?

There have been some attempts at answering these questions. Albrecht (1951:400-405) stated that upper middle and upper class persons continue in a high degree of social involvement and postpone professional inactivity, whereas, lower middle and lower class people are glad to finally end their laboring careers. This would put the answer on a social class basis.

Birren (1964:238) held a near opposite viewpoint. He maintained that the older persons who led culturally deprived and socially isolated lives in their preretirement years showed a high degree of life satisfaction when moved to a more active level of social interaction and increased diversitifaction of roles. Whereas, he continued, old people who had intensely involved and diversified social roles in their working lives seemed happy to disengage themselves from all the hustle and bustle.

To have arrived at such varying conclusions, it appears that one must have found working class subjects who wanted to disengage and the other found working class subjects who wanted activity and the same with their respective middle class subjects. It may be that both blue collar workers with sporadic work histories and middle class professionals with checkered careers are willing to have done with the need for employment. Whereas, a working class person who has held the same steady job all his laboring life and an upper middle class professional who has enjoyed a successful career may both refuse to retire, albeit for different reasons. It may be that a laborer's pension is so inadequate that he feels he can't survive with it and that while a professional worker's retirement plan may be sufficient, he doesn't want to give up the status and prestige connected with activity in his white collar occupation. A further study might discern if this is the case.

It is important in research studies testing theories of aging that the attritional loss be kept negligible. Mercer and Butler (1967:89-95) stated that the refusals tend to be more disengaged than cooperatives. The refusal rate in this study was minimal. In addition there were two refusals in this study about which something was known. One subject demanded that the questionnaire be surrendered to him after it was all completed. The researcher, once outside, filled in a new blank form immediately at his best recall. Although this case was not used in the analysis of this work, the subject would have had a very high activity level. His main objection to letting the interviewer keep the data was invasion of privacy. One other subject got partway through the interview and could not continue because he was very ill and tired. His spouse would not allow the worker to complete the questioning at a later date. This case was not used in the analysis either, but from the portion of the interview that was permitted, it is clear that the subject would have had a very low engagement score. Therefore, as far as this study is concerned, it is inconclusive whether or not refusals are more disengaged than cooperatives. However, this does not detract from the necessity of keeping the response rate as high as possible in gerontological work.

Perhaps, in no other field, is a longitudinal successional study needed more than in gerontology. It is imperative to determine whether or not aged adaptations are merely continuations in an established personal life style. The Duke Geriatric Study was a successional design, but its emphasis was medical rather than social; however, it did point out the great difficulty with panel maintenance inherent in longitudinal studies in gerontology (Maddox, 1965:120-125).

This particular study centered in the area of gerontology, but it is replete with possibilities for further studies concentrating on the consequences of late marriage in the area of the family. A study combining the specialities of gerontology and the family might determine the percentage of old persons who would be willing to live in a family unit similar to that suggested by Victor Kassel (1966:214-218) or some other form of graduated polygyny or voluntary group marriage. Certainly, there are some behavioral scientists (Otto et al., 1970) who strongly feel that there ought to be more options open to individuals in this society as regards marital forms. The aged may be the best category to begin experimenting with varying marriage structure. It is a fact that a higher percentage of both American men and women have experienced plural spouses than has the male citizenry of any Moslem nation (Bernard, 1956:45-46). This holds even more true for aged Americans. Hence, with this experience and without having to worry about bringing new-born children into a nonmonogamous home, the aged would be an ideal age group to test voluntary marital variances. Most would still prefer monogamy as is the case in other nations where one can opt for a different type of marriage. But it would take only a small percentage of both sexes over 60 willing to try a nonmonogamous family unit to compensate for the surplus of women, especially in the 55- to 85-year-old group.

Some basic theoretical questions immediately arise. Are unions of any form among aged persons functionless in terms of the basics, i.e., reproduction and socialization of children. Should elderly newlyweds be considered a family? If so, which type of family structure do they fit? In consanguineous families, younger members live with or near the older ones, and the older ones are usually consulted in decisions even if the advice is ignored, and they are always honored and respected; whereas, in conjugal families, the concern and purpose of the newly marrieds is the procreation of offspring. Where does an elderly recently married couple fit? A future study may help redefine some of the existing theory on the family.

Besides these theoretical implications, there are several major marriage and family hypotheses that could be tested by a replication of this work with a family focus. Three such hypotheses concerned with mate selection would be the homogamy hypothesis, the complementary-need hypothesis, and the residential propinquity hypothesis.

Some indication toward homogamy presented itself in this study because 82.4 percent of the newly married respondents were of the same religion. As far as residential propinquity is concerned, this study did not distinguish how far the couple lived from each other when they married; but it did ascertain that they did not know each other for a very long time--with over half of the couples knowing their partners for less than two years. (This may be due to the fact that the study was undertaken in Florida, a state with a high rate of in-migration of retired people.)

Complementary needs may also be a factor since 43.2 percent of the elderly wives were employed outside the home for a salary.

A future study of marriages contracted late in life should also test the role-reversal hypothesis, both within each spouse's family of generation and in their marriage. Does the maturity of children and concomitant dependency of parents lead the now-adult offspring to assume responsibility for the guidance of their elderly parents? A typical remark from a subject might be: "Thirty years ago I had to give my permission for my daughter to marry because she was under 21, now I'm over 65 and want to get married, but I have to see if it is all right with her first."

A shift in the traditional balance of power between the bride and groom may lead to internal role reversal. Heller (1968:437-442) in a study of younger marrieds, found that participation in the labor force is much associated with increased influence by the wife in family decision-making. It would be fruitful to seek out whether this finding will also hold for older marrieds depending on which one has the greater income, whose house they are living in, who owns the furniture, who is more robust. An elderly husband's reduced functionality may cause the leadership role to be transferred to the wife. Of course, the law of supply and demand must be taken into account. The very scarcity of males in these advanced age groups may be so gratifying to an older lady who has one that she will give him much deference.

This study seemed to demonstrate that children do not appear to mind seeing their elderly parent getting remarried. This finding conflicts with the assertation of the McKain study. In supporting his position, McKain cited the fact that in Connecticut, nearly one out of every five marriages involving older persons have one or both partners coming from another state (1969:6). McKain assumed from this that the couples were trying to get away from their children to have the marriage ceremony performed. But his data did not tell what percentage of these returned to their home states after the wedding. The data in this study showed that all the subjects who came from other states apparently just to get married, returned to those states after the wedding. This may be due to the fact that Florida with its high tourist appeal may have attracted some couples as an ideal honeymoon state. But it is just as likely that they journeyed to Florida to be married in the presence of their children, especially since they waited until they got there to have the actual ceremony performed and didn't make the trip for honeymoon purposes only. McKain suggests (1969:9-14) that the major reason older people keep their marital plans from their children is the fear that the children may try to put a stop to it. But senior citizens are over 21 and can get married at any time in any state in the union and there is nothing that anyone can legally do about it. It can be argued, however, that perhaps the prospective aged couples do not want to be subjected to the many informal pressures that children may be able to bring to bear against the marriage. If secrecy is the issue then, is it a temporary secrecy or a permanent one? Does the couple plan to disappear forever from their children or do they plan to surface somewhere at some time after the ceremony is officially performed? The former is very unlikely, but if the latter is the case why would the couple go so far away and cross state lines when a private ceremony could be had in the office of a justice of peace one or two counties from home? This could be accomplished in a few hours' driving time, making the absence of a day or so unneeded and a consequent explanation of the time unnecessary. Precisely because they did travel so far, and, as this study indicated, all returned, it is just as valid to assume they were going to the places in which their children resided to be married with them witnessing the ceremony. This assumption can be rationalized further by the assertion that retired people with more free time on their hands are more mobile while their children, still in their middle years, with their own young children and demanding full-time jobs, are more locally fixed. This type of situation would opt for the planning of the event in the locale of the married children. Another study is needed to determine which assumption is correct.

Even if it is accepted that this study proves that the children of an aged parent do not object to the remarriage of that parent, it only demonstrates approval at the beginning of the marriage, since in this study the question was put only to newlyweds. It must be remembered, as well, that the children were not asked about their feelings in the matter. It may be of importance to put the question to a sample of children of remarried aged persons at the time of the wedding ceremony, then ask it of them again in a follow-up study in about ten years or at least after their parent has died and his or her estate is probated. In many cases there might be a change in attitude about the parent marrying. Often the bulk of an estate goes to the surviving spouse, then when that partner dies it goes to his or her children, and, frequently, completely away from the children of the mate who died first.

If there is one thing that this study proves conclusively it is that Talcott Parsons was right in his Foreward to the book Growing Old (Cumming and Henry, 1961:v-viii) wherein he predicted that the subject of disengagement would become the focus of discussion and research for some time.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

General Information--Independent Variables

Item:

1. Group: Experimental _____. Comparison _____.

2. Highest Educational Level Completed:

    A. No schooling _____.
    B. Grammar School - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle one).
    C. High School - 1 2 3 4
    D. College - 1 2 3 4
    E. Other: (Specify with number of years) ____________________.

3. Number of Previous Marriages (Experimental Group Only): __________.

4. Way previous marriage ended (Exp. Group Only) ____________________.

5. If previous marriage ended in divorce, in which State was it granted? (Exp. Group Only): ______________________________.

6. Present Marital Status: __________________.

7. Number of years in present status: ________.

8. Sex: Male ____. Female _____.

9. Primary life-time occupation: __________________________________.

10. Present employment status: ______________________________________.

11. If retired from primary life-time occupation, but still working, how many years retired from primary life-time occupation? ______.

12. If fully retired, number of years fully retired:__________________.

13. Number of living children: ________.

14. Number of living siblings: ________.

15. Urban _____. Rural _____.

16. Location of present residence: __________________________________.

17. Respondent's age at last birthday: ________.

18. (Only for subjects in intact marriages at the time of the interview.)

Both partners over 60: _____. Spouse still under 60: ______.

19. Race: ______________.

20. Does house have telephone: __________.

21. State of Respondent's birth: ____________________.

Dependent Variable

Lifespace Measure:

Item: f Score

22. Number of others in household ______ (multiply by 30--if respondent lives alone, mark zero). ________

23. Now think of all your relatives. How many of these would you say that you feel really close to? _____. (Try to pin the respondent down to a specific number, even if only an approximate.)

24. Now take these relatives you feel closest to, how many of these do you see:

	frequency	number	Score (multiply number by ..)	
A.	Every day	______	30	________
B.	At least once a week	______	4	________
C.	A few times a month	______	3	________
D.	About once a month	______	1	________
E.	About once a year	______	0	________
F.	Almost never--haven't seen in years.		0	________

25. Now think of all the people you know, excluding relatives. How many of these would you consider close friends, that is, people you can confide in and talk over personal matters with? _____. (If impossible to give specific number, then get the respondent to make an estimate.)

Item: f score

26. Now take these close friends, how many of them do you get together with:

	frequency	number	Score (multiply number by ...)	
A.	Every day		30	
B.	At least once a week		4	
C.	A few times a month		3	
D.	About once a month		1	
E.	About once a year		0	
F.	Almost never--haven't seen in years.		0	

27. Now think of the neighbor that you see most frequently, do not include a close friend or relative, how often do you talk to this neighbor? (If the subject converses with no such neighbor, mark zero here ____.)

	frequency	number	Score (multiply number by ...)	
A.	Every day		30	
B.	At least once a week		4	
C.	A few times a month		3	
D.	About once a month		1	
E.	Anything less		0	

28. In the course of a day on the job, about how many people do you see and talk to? _____ (If the respondent is no longer employed, then leave it blank; if he works totally alone, mark it zero--multiply all the other numbers by 20). _______

29. Now, about people you see for certain specific purposes, like storekeepers, bus drivers, mailmen, waitresses, gas station attendants, waiters, meter readers, salespeople, and so on; about how many of these people do you see per week, would you say? _______ (Get an average at least and then multiply that number by 4). _______

Sum = _______

Church and Voluntary Organization Participation

Item:

30. How often do you attend church or temple?

    A. Twice or more often per week ______.
    B. Once a week _____.
    C. Once or twice a month _____.
    D. Two or three times a year _____.
    E. On very special occasions only _____.
    F. Never. ______.

31. Do you belong to any church committees, auxiliaries, teach Sunday School, or anything like that? ______. (If yes, get a list of all activities.)

32. Now, I'd like you to think very carefully and tell me if you belong to any nonchurch groups, clubs, associations, or the like: do you belong to any such groups? _______ (If yes, get a list of all the organizations, how often the subjects attend each, and just what he does at these clubs; if he merely belongs, his position is member only.)

Role Count

This section is based on the responses to the items on the life-space measure and club and church participation.

Item: Count

33. Number in household: (If respondent lives alone, count zero; if only one other than the respondent lives in the household, count 1; for two or more people, count 2.) _____

34. Friends: (Count 1 if any friends are mentioned and zero if none are mentioned.) _____

35. Relatives: (Count as for friends, 1 if any, 0 if none.) _____

36. Neighbors: (Count as for friends and relatives.) _____

37. Specific People: (Score one point if any are mentioned, zero points if none are mentioned.) _____

38. Fellow Workers: (Score one point if employed at all, zero points if no longer working.) _____

Item:	Count
39. Church: (Score one point for responses A, B, or C; zero points for responses D, E, or F.)	_____
40. Organizations: (Score one point if subject is a member of any, zero points if not a member of any.)	_____
Sum of role count:	_____

Perceived Lifespace

Item: Score

41. Did you see more or less of those relatives you feel closest to when you were forty-five years old than you do at your present age?

Answer	Score	
more now ____	4	
about the same ____	3	
more then ____	2	_____

42. Did you have more close friends whom you saw regularly when you were forty-five, than you do now?

Answer	Score	
more now ____	4	
about the same _____	3	
more then ______	2	_____

43. Would you say that you are more or less of a church-goer now than back when you were forty-five?

Answer	Score	
more now _____	4	
about the same or never went ____	3	
more then _____	2	_____

44. Would you say that you're more active in clubs and organizations now, or were you more active back when you were forty-five years of age?

Answer	Score	
more now _____	4	
about the same or never active ___	3	
more then _____	2	_____

Item:	Score
45. Thinking in terms of typical week back when you were forty-five, would you say that you saw and talked with more people generally than you do during a typical week now at your present age?	

Answer	Score	
more now ____	3	
about the same ____	2	
more then ____	1	____

Sum = ____

Life Satisfaction Index A

(Score one point for each response indicated by the "X"--score zero points for other answers.)

Item:	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
46. I am just as happy as when I was younger	X		
47. These are the best years of my life	X		
48. My life could be happier than it is now		X	
49. This is the dreariest time of my life		X	
50. Most of the things I do are boring and monotonous		X	
51. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often		X	

Subtotal ____

Item:	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
52. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were	X		
53. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now	X		
54. Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance	X		
55. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be	X		
56. I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future	X		
57. I feel old and somewhat tired		X	

Subtotal ____

Item:	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
58. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied	X		
59. I would not change my past life even if I could	X		
60. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life	X		

Subtotal ________

Item:	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
61. When I think back over my live, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted		X	
62. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse not better		X	
63. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most people I know	X		

Subtotal ________

Item:	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
64. Compared to other people my age I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life		X	
65. I feel my age; but it does not bother me	X		

Subtotal ________

Total ________

Open-ended Marriage Queries

Item:

67. Did any of your children object to your marriage?

68. Did anyone object to your marriage?

69. How long did you know each other before you married?

70. Are you both the same religion?

71. Is the wife working outside the home?

72. If a friend of yours was contemplating a late-in-life marraige, what advice would you give him?

73. What was the major reason why you two decided to marry?

APPENDIX B

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF A LIFE SATISFACTION INDEX: A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

A tool already in wide usage in the field has two distinct advantages over the construction of a new instrument by the researcher. First, the established measure has already been validated and thereby eliminates the costly and time-consuming pretesting that would be necessitated if a new questionnaire had to be devised solely for the purposes of this study. Secondly, a scale developed earlier will have been used in past research projects and the results published, thus enabling the researcher to compare and contrast his own findings. However, problems were expected, and, in fact, encountered with the use of the Life Satisfaction Index A in this study.

The purpose of this section is not merely for the researcher to assume the role of critic, but to point out some of the difficulties encountered in the field so that future workers can be guided by this experience.

As stated, difficulties were predicted before the attempt and it became apparent during the field experience that the administering of the LSIA is problematical in certain aspects. Others have already offered a good deal of criticism of this instrument (Wood, Wylie, and Sheafer, 1966, and Adams, 1969). Much of the problem is due to the way in which the device is worded. To begin with, the items are phrased in the first person. A derivative of "I" or "my" appears 38 times in 19 short items. (One query has no pronouns in it at all.) And to these the respondent is asked to reply with the more cumbersom "agree-disagree-uncertain" trichotomy, rather than the simple "yes-no-don't know." No matter how well explained beforehand, it is difficult for the interviewer to read and the subject to answer these items comfortably, in the described fashion.

To be sure, the original questionnaire was designed to be self-administered, but even so it would be better if the items were worded in the third person. Because, in essence, the instrument is asking the questions. It would be less disquieting, even for a reader, if the statements were in the third person. The rule that was followed in the interviews in this project was that, if the respondent was confused, the item would be reread exactly as it was; if the respondent still did not comprehend, the question was reworded in the third reading to make it clearer. In all cases, when a third reading became necessary, the subject understood immediately. In most cases the subject responded "yes-no-don't know" rather than "agree-disagree-uncertain" even though he had previously been instructed to answer according to the latter trichotomy.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty encountered with the phraseology was the double negatives and undivided questions. The two questions that should be divided both inquire as to how the respondent feels about being old. One, in the zest-for-life section of the LSIA, is "I feel old and somewhat tired" and the other, in the self-concept section of the LSIA, is "I feel my age and it does not bother me." (It must be remembered that some subjects were illiterate and some held the Ph.D. degree.)

In answer to the former one, thirteen respondents gave ambiguous replies. Their exact answers were: "Sometimes" (two subjects), "Sometimes, but not generally," "Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't," "Sometimes I feel old, and sometimes I feel tired after some activity, but they are not related," "I have good days and bad days," "I don't feel old, but I just can't hold out as well as I used to; so I do get tired once in a while," "I don't feel old but I do get tired," "I don't feel tired but I do feel old," "I feel old and a great deal tired," "In some ways I feel tired, but not all," "I don't feel old" (two subjects).

In reply to the latter one (I feel my age and it does not bother me), a total of thirty-one respondents gave ambiguous answers. Their exact responses were: "I don't feel my age" (two subjects), "I don't feel my age, and it does not bother me" (five subjects), "I don't think about my age." "I don't feel it, and it very rarely bothers me," "I don't feel old and nothing bothers me," "I do not feel my age and don't ever realize that it bothers me," "I do not feel it and it don't bother me," "I do not feel 75, but sure it bothers me," "I don't feel it, but it does bother me; and it would anybody else my age," "At times it does, and at times it doesn't," "Sometimes," "I feel my age and it sure does bother me" (three subjects), "I feel my age and it sure bothers me," "I feel my age, and it does bother me" (two subjects), "I feel it and it does bother me" (two subjects), "I feel it and it do bother me," "I feel my age and this bothers me," "I feel my age, and it bothers me a whole lot," "I feel it, and it also bothers me," "I feel it, and yes, it bothers me," "I feel it, and naturally it bothers me," "I feel my age and it bothers me because I get tired and I can't get around like I used to."

It quickly became apparent that an item that asks two questions cannot always be answered completely in the affirmative or entirely in the negative. When the questions were reread for the third time, an explanation was attempted. Even then most of the responses still fell into the uncertain category.

Since both items under discussion seek the same information, perhaps one could be eliminated and the other divided so that the data could be brought in less problematically without adding to or subtracting from the total number of items.

The two questions that should have the negative phrasing changed are: "I would not change my past life even if I could," and "When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted." Some exact replies to the former were: "Part of it," "Parts I would change, parts I wouldn't," "Yes, I would change some things," "No, I would not change it" (two subjects), "No, I wouldn't," and two respondents rendered unsolicited complaints about the faulty construction of the question, then one answered "Uncertain" and the other answered "Yes."

Some exact replies to the latter (When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted) were: "No, I didn't" (three subjects), "Nope, sure didn't," "I reckon I didn't," "I've always lived within my means," "I never expected too much but love and I got that now," "I'd make the sin parts of my past life better, because I don't want to miss out on heaven," and one respondent, without solicitation, complained about the double negative and then answered, "I did."

The double negative queries were sometimes complicated by double negative responses such as: "No, I can't say that," or other replies that caused vexation such as:"Yep, das right," "That ain't true," "I wouldn't say that," or "Don't know about that."

If the responses could not be interpreted after the second reading, the items were reread and explained, even if it meant eliminating the negative. Seldom, even after all this explanation, did the respondents use the words agree or disagree as they were told; they preferred to verablize words like yes and no, true and false, or right and wrong, with the simple yes-no-don't know trichotomy being the most popular by far.

There were some other troublesome items on the LSIA. One item on the zest-for-life section was worded: "I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now." Three responses, all of which technically would have to be marked "Disagree" may reflect three different levels of living zestfulness though they all very nearly say the same thing. The three replies were: "I like to do things spontaneously," "I take things as they come, day by day," and "I have never planned anything in my life." Another item on the zest for living section, "As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be," received the reply: "I never gave it a thought." This response was placed in the uncertain column.

One question worded, "I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life," which attempted to measure the degree of congruency between desired and achieved goals, was answered: "I've gotten more than I expected or ever hoped for." Technically, this should be placed in the uncertain category, although this may not be the implication.

One query in the resolution and fortitude part, "I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most people I know," drew a reply, "I got fewer breaks than most, but I took better advantage of them." Grammatically, this response would have to be considered disagreement and therefore received zero points on the resolution and fortitude scale, when, obviously, it indicates a high degree of this quality.

Finally, in the scoring system, this researcher, on the scene, sensed that the uncertain response reflected a middle attitude between total disagreement and total agreement and not a complete absence of feeling in either direction. Therefore, this author agrees with Wood, Wylie, and Scheafer (1966:31) that the uncertain response should be weighted.

It may be appropriate to suggest a modified LSIA and scoring system. This modification should take into account the item-analysis work of Adams (1969:470-474). He found that the last two items on the instrument which purport to measure social self-concept were very poorly correlated in all his analyses; therefore, he recommended that they both be rejected from further use in the LSIA. One of these was one of the divided questions criticized earlier. The other: "Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life," did not discriminate well in this study either, receiving only 13 negative replies out of 131 responses.

Lastly, many uneducated respondents did not know the meaning of dreariest, lot, or monotonous. A modified LSIA instrument and scoring key would contrast with the LSIA scale and scoring method thusly:

LSIA and Scoring Method as Developed by Neugarten, *et al*.

Mood Tone Portion	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
1. I am just as happy as when I was younger.	1	0	0
2. These are the best years of my life.	1	0	0
3. My life could be happier than it is now.	0	1	0
4. This is the dreariest time of my life.	0	1	0
5. Most of the things I do are boring and monotonous.	0	1	0
6. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.	0	1	0
Zest for Life Portion			
7. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	1	0	0
8. I have made plans for things I'll be doing a month or a year from now.	1	0	0
9. Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance.	1	0	0
10. As I grow older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	1	0	0

Suggested Modified LSIA and Changed Scoring System

Mood Tone Portion	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
1. Are you as happy now as when you were younger?	2	0	1
2. Are these the best years of your life?	2	0	1
3. Could your life be happier than it is now?	0	2	0
4. Is this the most unhappy time of your life?	0	2	1
5. Are most of the things you do boring to you?	0	2	1
6. Do you get down in the dumps more than other people?	0	2	1
Zest for Life Portion			
7. Are the things you are doing as interesting as they ever were?	2	0	1
8. Have you made future plans?	2	0	1
9. Compared to other people your age, do you make a good appearance?	2	0	1
10. As you grow older, do things seem better than you thought they would be?	2	0	1

Zest for Life Portion (continued)	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
11. I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future.	1	0	0
12. I feel old and somewhat tired.	0	1	0
Congruency Portion			
13. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.	1	0	0
14. I would not change my past life even if I could.	1	0	0
15. I've gotten pretty much what I expected out of life.	1	0	0
Fortitude Portion			
16. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted.	0	1	0
17. In spite of what people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse not better.	0	1	0
18. I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most people I know.	1	0	0
Self-Concept Portion			
19. Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life.	0	1	0
20. I feel my age; but it does not bother me.	1	0	0

Zest for Life Portion (continued)	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
11. Do you expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to you in the future?	2	0	1
12. Do you feel old?	0	2	1
13. Does your age bother you?	0	2	1
Congruencey Portion			
14. As you look back on your life, are you fairly well satisfied?	2	0	1
15. Would you change parts of your past life if you could?	2	0	1
16. Have you gotten pretty much what you expected out of life?	2	0	1
Fortitude Portion			
17. Have you gotten most of the important things you wanted out of life?	0	2	1
18. Do you think the life of the average man is getting worse rather than better?	0	2	1
19. Do you think you've taken better advantage of the breaks in life than most people?	2	0	1

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Paul Snyder was born on April 13, 1932, in Girardville, Pennsylvania, and was graduated from the Pottsville, Pennsylvania, High School on June 14, 1949. On June 15, 1949, he enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he served for four years.

He began college, under the Korean G. I. Bill, in the Fall of 1953. As an undergraduate, he attended Mississippi College, Carnegie Tech, and Florida State University, changing his field of major study in the process from engineering to geology to social science. He received the Bachelor of Science degree from Florida State University in 1958, and the Master of Science degree in social science from the same university in June, 1961. He took some course work toward his master's at the University of Miami.

During the course of his earlier educational training, he worked part time, or, interrupting the educational process for economic reasons, full time, at a number of jobs, which included experience as a pin-setter in a bowling alley, telephone lineman, employee on the NASA rocket test range, cab driver, postal clerk and carrier, topographic surveyor, social case worker, employee of the U. S. Housing and Urban Development Department, and employee of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. This diversity of occupational experience has contributed to the range and direction of his interests in sociology.

He began his study toward the doctorate at Florida State University with the aid of a teaching assistantship, continued his doctoral work at

Utah State University as a research assistant, and completed his terminal degree program at the University of Florida where he was employed grading the sociology correspondence courses in the home study division. He has also obtained professional experience on the sociology faculties at Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas; Mississippi State College for Women, Columbus, Mississippi; Valdosta State College, Valdosta, Georgia; Eastern Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina; Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa; Limestone College, Gaffney, South Carolina; Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, Florida; and he has been contracted effective August 16, 1971, by the University of Maryland to teach their sociology extension courses in the Far East.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Irving L. Webber

Irving L. Webber, Chairman
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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Felix M. Berardo

Felix M. Berardo
Associate Professor of Sociology

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Joseph S Vandiver

Joseph S. Vandiver
Professor of Sociology

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Harold R Hunter

Harold R. Hunter
Assistant Professor of Sociology

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August, 1971

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